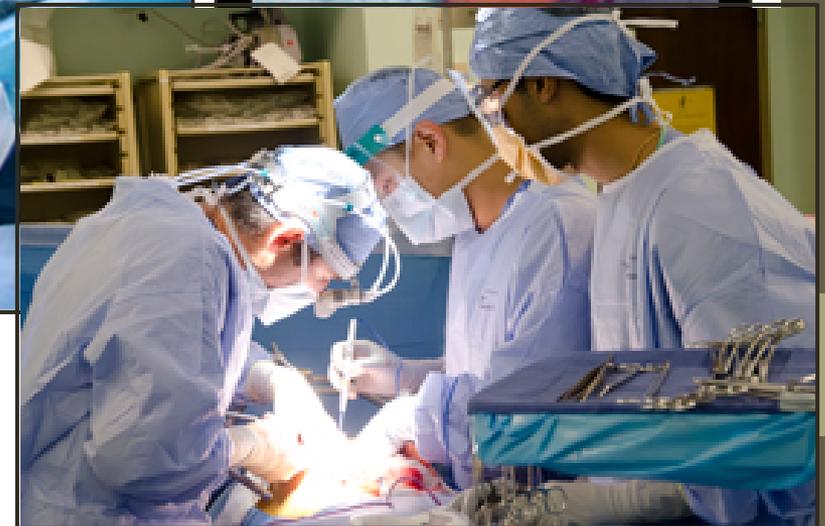


Observing in the Operating Room (O.R.)



Soooo, you're observing in the Operating Room (O.R.)...

There are many reasons a patient will end up in the OR...some could be

- They need their gallbladder or appendix out
- A sudden fall, a shattered wrist – an unexpected surgery to fix
- A new hip or knee that will allow pain free movement again
- A new heart valve or coronary bypass
- A shocking cancer diagnosis, now here to establish extent, remove and hopefully begin to heal
- They want to regain that youthful look and remove wrinkles, or add something here and there
- Repairing the trauma of being an innocent victim caught in a crossfire or being the intended target of that gunfire

They come to the OR to be healed – not to leave with a Surgical Site Infection (SSI)...

- **To prevent SSI – we control the environment the best we can**
 - **As an observer – you are part of that process**

It is the responsibility of everyone that enters the OR, including those just observing, to understand and follow basic principles of sterile technique to help keep our patients safe and free from infection.

How do we “control” the environment?

- Require appropriate surgical attire
- Restrict access to the surgical areas
- Practice sterile technique to prevent contamination of the sterile field

What is “Appropriate Surgical Attire”?

- “Scrubs”
 - Hospital supplied
 - Help to reduce contamination from the environment
 - Cannot be worn or taken home – return them before you leave
 - Bringing them home contributes to spread of infections
- Shoe covers
 - Removed before leaving the department
- Hats
- Surgical Masks
- Eye protection



Scrubs –

No visible clothing seen (no t-shirts or long sleeves)

Hat –

Covering all hair

Shoe covers -

Mask -

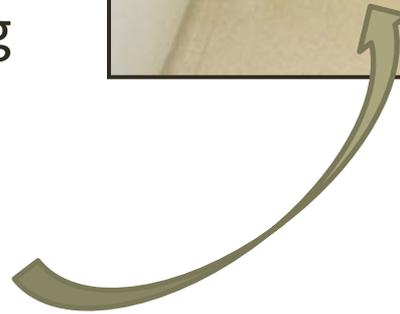
Eye protection -

Restricted Access...what does that mean?

- Limits traffic in and out of the OR
- 3 Levels of Restriction within the OR
 - Unrestricted
 - Semi-restricted
 - Restricted

Unrestricted...

- Street clothes are allowed
- Unrestricted areas include:
 - Lounge, Locker Rooms
 - Front Desk
 - PACU and Pre-op Holding Area (POHA)
 - External hallways (“before the red line”)



Semi-Restricted...

- Peripheral support areas of the OR
- Include:
 - Hallways leading to the OR Suites
 - Storage areas for clean and sterile supplies
 - Work areas for processing instruments
 - Scrub sinks
- Located BEHIND the red line on the floor
- Before you open the door to the OR Suites



Semi-Restricted...

- Scrubs, booties, a hat or a bunny suit (which goes over street clothes) must be worn in the semi-restricted areas at all times
- “White coats” are not to be worn in this area
- Please – no personal items may be brought into the OR (backpacks, phones, cameras, laptops, etc)



Restricted...

- **Highest level of restriction**
- Includes
 - OR Suites
 - Procedure Rooms
 - Sterile Core – where instruments and supplies are stored
- **OR Attire must include:**
 - Scrubs
 - Hat/hoods
 - Hat cover all hair and earrings
 - Hood is worn if a beard is present – goes over the head and ties around the neck
 - Booties
 - Mask
 - Eye Protection



Restricted...

- Masks
 - Must be worn at all times when in the OR room.
 - They must be form fitted to your face, tight over the nose, without gaps at the side and both sets of string tied, no exceptions.
 - Change mask each time you go to another case.
- Eye Protection when cases are going



Now what – I'm IN the OR....

- You will be introduced to the RN Circulator – He or She will direct you where to stand
 - OR Suites come in different sizes – some are quite large – others are small –
- It is very important to understand what is “sterile”
- The “**Sterile Field**” is the area on and around the patient that has been prepared with all the instruments and supplies that will be used during the procedure
- **The standard rule: if it's blue or green, don't touch it. Everything blue or green is sterile. Don't even reach over any sterile field for any reason.**
- **If you have any questions about what is sterile, assume it IS sterile and treat it as such until you can ask about it.**
- **Clear plastic in the OR is also sterile.**

OR Staff that are “Scrubbed in” are also considered sterile –

Please maintain a safe distance from
anyone or anything that is “sterile”

“Safe” = minimum 12 inches

Never turn your back to the sterile
field



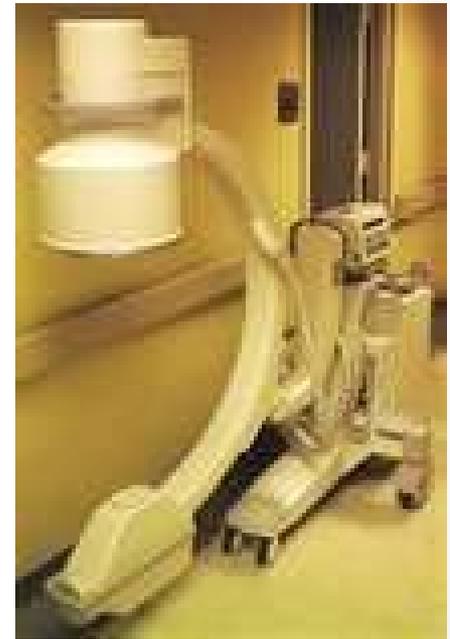
Here are some “Sterile Fields”



Download from
Dreamstime.com
The information contained herein is for informational purposes only.
2021/11/25
Fahri Gungören | Dreamstime.com



These are the items that get covered with clear sterile drapes



The area behind the surgical drape is the Anesthesia Provider area – this area is **not sterile**



What do I do if I THINK I MIGHT have contaminated something?

- Tell someone right away!
- The OR staff will need to take care of the contamination so that the pt is not exposed
- If you see someone else contaminate something accidentally – you can say something too!
 - This is very important to keep the pt safe

Other Important things about observing....

- Never forget HIPAA! Patient privacy is always a priority!
 - Be mindful when entering and leaving rooms
 - Do not share anything about the patient with friends or family
 - In some procedures, the patients may still be awake – be aware of how you are speaking
- Eat a good breakfast that morning. (Something more than an energy bar....)
- Wear comfortable shoes
- If you can't see – the nurse may provide a step for you
- Wash your hands minimum upon entering and exiting the OR

Other Important things about observing....

- Don't lock your knees while watching. Step around a little bit, even if you don't have much room to move. Watch out for the sterile field!
- If you feel weak or faint – TELL THE NURSE.. step out of the room or sit down on the floor. The chairs in the OR's have wheels and may move from under you if you try and sit suddenly
- Getting out of the room and taking your mask off may help you feel better

Resources ~

AORN. (2014). Perioperative standards and recommended practices. Denver, CO:

AORN, Inc.

Phippen, M.L, Ulmer, B. C. & Wells, M.P. (2009). Competency for safe patient care during operative and invasive procedures. Denver, CO:

Competency & Credentialing Institute.

