Summary of Key Points

Isolation of Patients:
All patients with a known or suspected infectious disease must be isolated in a single room with appropriate isolation precautions as outlined in section 3 of the manual.

Notification:
A case of known or suspected infectious disease or a possible outbreak of infection or food poisoning should be notified to the Infection Control Nurse. This is important in that it enables prompt action to be taken to prevent further spread of the infection. Notification should occur on clinical suspicion of the disease and is not dependent on laboratory confirmation. It should be done as soon as possible, preferably by telephone in the first instance if the disease concerned is of a serious nature, to ensure a speedy and a proper follow-up.

Hand Washing:
Hand Washing is the single most important measure which is vital to prevent the spread of infection. Hands must be washed regularly before and after contact with the patient or his environment and immediately after gloves are moved. Refer to section 9 for details.

Education and Training:
All staff, including those new to the post, must receive education and training in safe handling and disposal of sharps, infected waste and all other activities to prevent exposure of micro-organisms to themselves and others. In addition, relevant staff should also be trained in aseptic techniques i.e. insertion of an IV line, urinary catheter, lumbar puncture, wound dressing, etc. The education programme should be regularly updated in view of changing knowledge and work practice.

Laboratory Specimens:
Laboratory specimens must be correctly labelled and packaged, i.e. the request form must be kept separate from the specimen in a self-sealing plastic bag. Specimens from patients with a known or suspected infection disease must have a red label both on the request form and on the specimen container.

Clinical Waste:
Waste from patients with a known or suspected infection should be treated as CLINICAL WASTE and must be put into a yellow plastic bag. This must be securely fastened when three-quarters full, taken to a designated storage area or clinical waste from which they should be collected for incineration. Refer to section 5 for details.

Laundry:
Linen must be processed in accordance with the policy is outlined in section 5 of the manual.

Cleaning and Disinfection of Equipment:
All items of equipment for patient care must be suitably cleaned, disinfected or sterilised before re-use as outlined in section 4 of the manual. Special attention must be given to the environment which should be maintained in a clean state in line with good housekeeping practice.

Handling and Disposal of Sharps:
- Avoid using sharps whenever possible. Never leave sharps lying around, dispose of them carefully into a sharps container. Remember that it is the personal responsibility of
the person using a sharp to dispose of it safely as soon as possible after use or ensure that it has been safely discarded.

- Used needles must not be resheathed.
- Sharps containers must be kept in a location which excludes injury to patients, visitors and staff. They must be securely closed when three-quarters full and disposed of by incineration.

**Sharps Injury:**
Sharps injury and accidental exposure of non-intact skin, conjunctiva or mucous membrane to blood or certain other body fluids must be reported to the Accident and Emergency Department and managed as outlined in the hospital policy.