

CHAIN OF INFECTION TERMS

CAUSATIVE AGENTS in infection are pathogens. Pathogens are micro-organisms that are capable of causing diseases or infections. If micro-organisms from a person's own body cause an infection, it is called an endogenous infection.

RESERVOIR: The place where the microorganism resides, thrives, and reproduces, i.e., food, water, toilet seat, elevator buttons, human feces, respiratory secretions.

PORTAL OF EXIT: The place where the organism leaves the reservoir, such as the respiratory tract (nose, mouth), intestinal tract (rectum), urinary tract, or blood and other body fluids.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION: The means by which an organism transfers from one carrier to another by either direct transmission (direct contact between infectious host and susceptible host) or indirect transmission (which involves an intermediate carrier like an environmental surface or piece of medical equipment).

PORTAL OF ENTRY The opening where an infectious disease enters the host's body such as mucus membranes (in the mouth, nose, eyes, etc.), open wounds, or tubes inserted in body cavities like urinary catheters or feeding tubes.

SUSCEPTIBLE HOST The person who is at risk for developing an infection from the disease. Several factors make a person more susceptible to disease including age (young people and elderly people generally are more at risk), underlying chronic diseases such as diabetes or asthma, conditions that weaken the immune system like HIV, certain types of medications, invasive devices like feeding tubes, and malnutrition.

CHAIN OF INFECTION

For an infection to develop, each link of the chain must be connected. Breaking any link of the chain can stop the transmission of infection!!

