



Means of Transmission

Learning how infectious diseases are transmitted is important for determining proper infection prevention and control measures and must be considered in Risk Assessment.

Microorganisms vary by size, the length of time that they can survive on surfaces or in the air and the way they are transmitted. There are four main routes of transmission listed below. Some pathogens have multiple routes of transmission, therefore it is also essential to determine if pathogens are transmitted person to person, from contaminated objects, or from animals and insects.

Contact	Direct	Direct physical contact between the source and the susceptible person, including exposure to skin and body secretions. Examples: Influenza virus; touching a wound; Infectious mononucleosis; chlamydia
	Indirect	Infectious agent deposited onto an object or surface (fomite) and survives long enough to transfer to another person who subsequently touches the object. These may include medical equipment, clothing, bedding or even drinking cups. Examples: Influenza; Norwalk, rhinovirus; gram-positive bacteria; gram-negative bacteria; atypical bacteria.
Droplet		Transmission expelled from respiratory secretions by coughing, sneezing or talking. Droplets are large particles that rapidly settle on surfaces or come in contact with the nose, mouth, or eyes. Examples: Meningococcus; Influenza; Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
Airborne		Transmission via aerosols (microscopic airborne particles) that stay suspended in the air. Can be spread via ventilation systems. Examples: Tuberculosis (TB); measles; chickenpox
Aerosol Transmissible		Infectious agents are suspended or present in particles or droplets and contact the eyes, nose, mouth or are inhaled. Examples: Ebola, Influenza, Mumps, Pertussis