**AORN Recommended Practices on Surgical Wound Classification**

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention uses an adaptation of the American College of Surgeons wound classification schema, which divides surgical wounds into four classes:

•**CLASS I/CLEAN WOUNDS** – an uninfected surgical wound in which no inflammation is encountered and the respiratory, alimentary, genital, or urinary tracts are not entered. Clean wounds are primarily closed and, if necessary, drained with closed drainage. Surgical wound incisions that are made after nonpenetrating (ie, blunt) trauma should be included in this category if they meet the criteria.

•**CLASS II/CLEAN-CONTAMINATED WOUNDS** – a surgical wound in which the respiratory, alimentary, genital, or urinary tracts are entered under controlled conditions and without unusual contamination. Specifically included in this category are surgical procedures involving the biliary tract, appendix, vagina, and oropharynx, provided no evidence of infection is encountered and no major break in technique occurs.

•**CLASS III/CONTAMINATED WOUNDS** – open, fresh, accidental wounds. This typically involves surgical procedures in which a major break in sterile technique occurs (eg, emergency open cardiac massage) or when gross spillage from the gastrointestinal tract and incisions in which acute, nonpurulent inflammation is encountered.

•**CLASS IV/DIRTY OR INFECTED WOUNDS** – old traumatic wounds with retained or devitalized tissue, as well as wounds that involve existing clinical infection or perforated viscera. This definition suggests that the organisms causing postoperative infection were present in the wound before the surgical procedure.

**Resources**

•Recommended practices for prevention of transmissible infections in the perioperative practice setting. In: Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices. Denver, CO: AORN, Inc; 2013;331-364.

•Van Wicklin S. CDC surgical wound classification system/Surgical wound classification decision tree [Clinical Issues]. AORN J. 2012.

•Mangram AJ , Horan TC , Pearson ML , Silver LC .Hospital Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee. Guidelines for prevention of surgical site infection, 1999. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol. 1999;27(2):97-132.

•Howard JM, Barker WF, Culbertson WR, et al. Postoperative wound infections: The influence of ultraviolet irradiation of the operating room and various other factors . Ann Surg. 1964;160(Suppl 2):1–192.

•Simmons BP. Guideline for prevention of surgical wound infections. Infect Control. 1982;3:185-196.

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