

START WITH STANDARD. ADD THE RIGHT LAYER.

Distinguish Standard, Contact, Droplet and Airborne Precautions in a basic exam scenario.

THE DECISION PATH

1

Standard applies to everyone

Use Standard Precautions for all patient care. Choose PPE according to expected exposure; include hand hygiene and safe equipment handling.

[N1]

2

Identify the additional route

When Standard alone is insufficient, add the indicated Transmission-Based Precautions. Some infections require more than one category.

[N2, N3]

3

Match the protective measure

Contact: gown and gloves for relevant patient/environment contact. Droplet: mask on room entry. Airborne: AIIR and a fit-tested NIOSH-approved N95 or higher respirator.

[N2]

WORKED EXAMPLE / ORIGINAL STUDYMAPS SCENARIO

The prompt explicitly requires Airborne Precautions

An exam scenario asks which room and respiratory protection match an Airborne Precautions order. Appropriate resources are available.

Standard precautions

+

Transmission-based precautions

When indicated by the route

1. Keep Standard Precautions, including hand hygiene and exposure-based PPE.
2. Select an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR).
3. Use a fit-tested NIOSH-approved N95 or higher-level respirator for healthcare personnel.
4. Check the pathogen-specific guidance for additional precautions; the categories are not always mutually exclusive.

RESULT

Standard + Airborne, with any other indicated precautions.

Principles: [N1, N2, N3]. Original example: StudyMaps.

Catch this mistake

Transmission-Based Precautions add to Standard Precautions. They do not replace them. A surgical mask and a fit-tested respirator are not interchangeable.

CLOSE THE BOARD. SHOW YOUR WORKING.

Original practice problems. Answer key on page 3.

PRACTICE 1

Which statement best describes PPE selection under Standard Precautions?

- A. Use the same PPE for every task
- B. Use PPE according to anticipated exposure
- C. PPE is needed only after infection is confirmed
- D. Gloves replace hand hygiene

PRACTICE 2

A basic exam prompt specifies Droplet Precautions. Which listed entry measure matches CDC guidance?

- A. No respiratory protection is needed
- B. Wear a mask upon room entry
- C. Always replace the mask with gloves
- D. Stop Standard Precautions

PRACTICE 3

Which pair matches Airborne Precautions when suitable resources are available?

- A. Shared room and gloves alone
- B. AIIR and fit-tested N95 or higher respirator
- C. Ordinary room and surgical mask only
- D. Any room without hand hygiene

Return later

A scenario requires both Contact and Airborne Precautions. Which statement is correct?

- A. Choose only the stricter-sounding category
- B. Use both indicated categories in addition to Standard
- C. Use only Standard because the categories conflict
- D. Use Droplet as a substitute for both

Write your reasoning before checking page 3.

CHECK THE REASONING, TOO.

PRACTICE 1

Use PPE according to anticipated exposure

Standard Precautions use a risk assessment. Expected exposure determines PPE needs; hand hygiene remains part of care.

Separate the rule applying to everyone from the PPE chosen for a particular task.

PRACTICE 3

AIIR and fit-tested N95 or higher respirator

CDC pairs an airborne infection isolation room with appropriate respiratory protection, including a fit-tested NIOSH-approved N95 or higher respirator.

Remember both the room requirement and respiratory protection, not only one.

PRACTICE 2

Wear a mask upon room entry

CDC specifies a mask on entering the patient room or space for Droplet Precautions. Additional pathogen-specific measures may also apply.

Match the stated route first, then check any additional instructions in the scenario.

RETURN LATER

Use both indicated categories in addition to Standard

Transmission-Based categories can be combined when multiple routes require control. Standard Precautions remain in place.

Treat the categories as layers that can combine, not a single-choice hierarchy.

Sources and scope

Foundational exam review. For clinical care, use current facility policy and pathogen-specific guidance. This pilot has a source check, not independent nurse-educator review. It is an exam-study supplement, not a clinical protocol.

[N1] CDC: Standard Precautions for All Patient Care · <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/basics/standard-precautions.html> · Checked 2026-09-09

[N2] CDC: Transmission-Based Precautions · <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html> · Checked 2026-09-09

[N3] CDC Isolation Guideline: Precautions · <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/precautions.html> · Checked 2026-09-09

[N4] NCSBN: 2026 NCLEX-RN Test Plan · https://www.nclex.com/files/2026_RN_Test%20Plan_English-F.pdf · Checked 2026-09-09