

Infection Prevention

Learn how others are working to help keep you safe from infection and how you can participate in your care.

and YOU at the Hospital

Who are “infection preventionists?”

Infection preventionists are among the many experts who help to protect you from healthcare-associated infections. They work in many healthcare settings to keep you, visitors, volunteers, employees, and healthcare providers safe from infection.

What are healthcare-associated infections?

Healthcare-associated infections can occur as a result of the care or treatment that a patient receives.

How does an infection preventionist affect the care I receive?

Infection preventionists partner with members of your healthcare team and use proven methods to ensure that you stay safe from healthcare-associated infections during your stay.

You may notice the presence of infection prevention activities throughout the facility:

- Alcohol-based hand rubs
- Disinfectant wipes
- Healthcare providers wearing gloves, masks, and gowns
- Hand washing stations
- “Cover your cough” signs
- Evidence that surfaces and equipment are being cleaned

What do I need to know to stay safe?

Your direct care providers are concerned about your health and safety. They want you to have a voice and participate in care. You and your family are important members of the healthcare team.

Please speak up! Do not feel shy about asking for more information about your care. Infection prevention is everyone’s business!

If you have a concern, feel free to ask the following or any other questions:

→ If you have not seen healthcare staff who care for you either wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand rub, ask them to do so. This also applies to visitors.

“I didn’t see you clean your hands. Would you mind cleaning your hands before touching me?”

→ Before receiving an injection or IV, ask if the needle, vial, tubing, and syringe have been newly opened for you.

“Is this the first time this needle, vial, tubing, and syringe have been used?”

→ If you have a catheter in your bladder or vein, tell your nurse if it becomes loose or painful. Also ask each day when it can be removed.

“Do I still need this catheter today? Why?”

→ If you are having surgery, ask your doctor if you should shower with an antiseptic soap before you are admitted.

“Am I supposed to shower with an antiseptic before I’m admitted? If so, can you explain this process to me?”

→ Ask your provider if you need any shots or vaccines.

“Should I be receiving any shots or vaccines to protect me during my stay or after I go home?”

→ If you think that the area around you or the equipment in your room looks dirty, ask to have it cleaned.

“This [_____] looks dirty. Can someone please clean this?”

→ If you have a bandage (also called a “dressing”), let your nurse know if it gets wet, loose or feels uncomfortable.

“Can you please check my bandage? It’s loose and uncomfortable.”

Important reminders

Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand rubs often and ask your caregivers and visitors to do the same. This is one of the most important ways to prevent infection.

Who is the infection preventionist at this facility?

You are receiving care at a medical facility that is committed to infection prevention. That is why this facility has a dedicated infection preventionist on staff.

The infection preventionist in this facility is:

How can I learn more about infection prevention?

Visit the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)’s website www.apic.org/patientsafety to learn more about how you can protect yourself and loved ones from infection.

