



# Infection Prevention and YOU at the Hospital

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

## *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
- Hand washing stations
- Disinfectant wipes
- “Cover your cough” signs
- Healthcare providers wearing gloves, masks, and gowns
- 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 your 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 an 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.”*

**One last important reminder:**

Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand rub 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](http://www.apic.org/patientsafety) to learn more about how you can protect yourself and your loved ones from infection.

