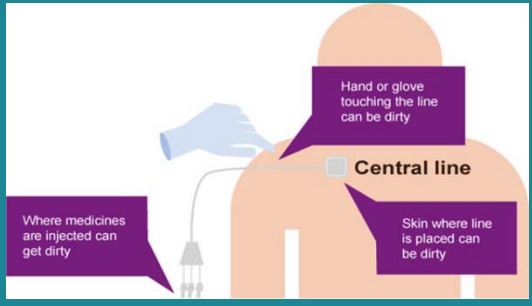


Protect yourself against Healthcare-associated Infections (HAIs)

Did you know that patients can get infections during their medical care while they are being treated for something else?



What are healthcare-associated infections (HAIs)?

Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are infections that patients get while receiving medical care for another condition.

- HAIs are an important public health problem. About 1 out of every 20 hospital patients will get an HAI.
- Infections can be associated with the devices used to provide care, such as catheters or ventilators. These infections include:
 - Central line-associated bloodstream infections;
 - Catheter-associated urinary tract infections; and
 - Ventilator-associated pneumonia.
- Infections may also occur at the site in the body where surgery takes place (called surgical site infections).
- The good news is that there are ways to prevent these infections.

Preparing for your care: Things to ask your doctor or nurse to protect yourself from infections

Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about your safety and ask what is being done to protect you.

- "Would you please clean your hands again in front of me?" If you do not see your nurses and doctors clean their hands, ask them to do so. Also remind your loved ones and visitors to clean their hands. They want to prevent infections just like you do. Washing hands can prevent the spread of germs.
- "Do I still need a central line catheter or urinary catheter?" Leaving a catheter in place too long increases the chances of getting an infection.
- "Can you tell me about safe injection practices?" Safe injection practices are a set of practices that healthcare providers should follow when they give patients injections. For example, doctors and nurses should never use the same syringe on more than one patient, even if the needle is changed.
- "How long will I be taking this antibiotic?" Help prevent antibiotic resistance by taking all your antibiotics and not sharing your antibiotics with other people. Remember that antibiotics don't work against viruses like the ones that cause the common cold.
- "I have diarrhea. Do you think I have *C. diff*?" Tell your doctor if you have diarrhea, especially if you are also taking an antibiotic. It could be an infection called *C. diff*. (aka *Clostridium difficile*).
- "I noticed some redness and fluid coming from the place where I had my procedure. It hurts in that area. I am worried it may be infected." Know the signs and symptoms of infection. Some skin infections appear as redness with leaking fluid or pus at an IV catheter site or surgical incision site. Often these symptoms come with pain or a fever. Tell your doctor if you have these symptoms.

Healthcare-associated infections are caused by a wide variety of germs. These infections can cause more health problems and cost more money. Worst of all, they can be **deadly**.



- "How can I prepare for surgery? What can I do to help reduce the risk of getting a surgical site infection?" There are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting a surgical site infection, an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Talk to your doctor to learn what you should do to get ready for surgery. Tell your doctor about other medical problems you have.

For more information on HAIs and the state of Massachusetts' efforts, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/stateplans/state-hai-plans/ma.html>

Web resources:

1. Healthcare-associated Infections: www.cdc.gov/hai
2. Information on Central Line bloodstream infections: <http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/HAI/index.html> ;
http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/NNL_CA-BSI.pdf
3. Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings: <http://www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene/index.html> ;
<http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/videowindow.asp?f=9467&af=c>
4. Frequently Asked Questions about Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection:
http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/ca_uti/cauti_faqs.html
5. The One and Only Campaign: <http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/>
6. Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work: <http://www.cdc.gov/GetSmart/>
7. *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*) infection: http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/cdiff/Cdiff_infect.html
8. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA): <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa>
9. Preparing for surgery: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/guidelines/SSI_tagged.pdf;
http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/NNL_CA-UTI.pdf;
http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/NNL_VAP.pdf ;
http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/NNL_C-Diff.pdf ;
http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/NNL_MRSA.pdf ;
<http://www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/patient%2oguides/VRE.pdf>