

PATIENT SAFETY: PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS (HAIs)

The Facts

- You can get an HAI from any healthcare setting (hospital, nursing home, outpatient center or dialysis center).
- Germs that cause an HAI can be spread person to person by unclean hands of healthcare workers and improper use of medical equipment.
- HAIs affect 1 in 31 hospitalized patients¹ and 197 patients with an HAI die every day.²
- In 2019, there were 3,547 HAIs reported in North Carolina. This is a decrease in over 600 reported HAIs in 2018.³
- NC healthcare facilities are working to keep patients safe. You can help by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and following the recommendations below.



You Can Protect Yourself From HAIs By Being a Safe, Informed Patient⁴

- 1** **SPEAK UP:** Share your questions and concerns with your healthcare providers. Ask them what they are doing to protect you.
- 2** **KEEP HANDS CLEAN:** Be sure everyone cleans their hands before touching you.
- 3** **BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE:** Ask if tests will be performed to make sure you are given the right antibiotic.
- 4** **KNOW INFECTION SIGNS:** Tell your healthcare provider if you notice any symptoms such as drainage, redness or pain at your IV catheter site or surgery site.
- 5** **CHECK FOR DIARRHEA:** Tell your healthcare provider if you have three or more loose bowel movements within 24 hours, especially if you have been taking an antibiotic.
- 6** **PROTECT YOURSELF:** Get vaccinated against the flu and other diseases to prevent these infections.

Make Sure Your Hands Are Clean⁵

Your hands can spread germs and need to be cleaned regularly. Make sure you, your visitors and your healthcare providers are cleaning hands appropriately:

- after touching bed rails, bedside tables, remote controls, phones or doorknobs;
- after using the restroom;
- before touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- before eating;
- before and after changing bandages; and
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Clean hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer or wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Turn off the faucet with a paper towel.



The NC SHARPPS Program Works to Keep You Safe

NC Surveillance for Healthcare Associated and Antimicrobial-Resistant Pathogens Patient Safety (SHARPPS) Program mission: to work in partnership to prevent, detect and respond to events and outbreaks of healthcare-associated and antimicrobial resistant infections in North Carolina.

The NC SHARPPS Program:

- collaborates with local, state and national partners in public health, healthcare and academia to develop and implement infection prevention and antibiotic stewardship strategies.
- provides education and training to healthcare professionals to increase awareness and prevent HAIs and antimicrobial resistance.



For more information regarding HAIs and the NC SHARPPS Program, visit <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/hai/program.html> and email nchai@dhhs.nc.gov

¹ CDC. HAI and Antibiotic Use Prevalence Survey, March 2017. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/eip/antibiotic-use.html>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) HAI Data Data Portal. Updated October 2018. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/data/portal/index.html>

³ APIC. APIC Cost of healthcare-associated Infections. May 2011 Available at <https://apic.org/resources/cost-calculators>. Accessed March 20, 2020

⁴ CDC Patient Safety. What You Can Do To Be A Safe Patient. March 2014. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/patientsafety/patient-safety.html> Accessed March 2020.

⁵ CDC. Hand Hygiene. Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings. March 2016. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/index.html>. Accessed March 20, 2020.



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