

Infection Prevention News You Can Use

Patient Education

Actively engaging patients, families, and caregivers is a well-established strategy for improving the quality of care and enhancing patient safety. Integrating patients, family members, and caregivers into infection prevention and control activities can help prevent healthcare-associated infections, decrease length of stay, and improve health outcomes. Patient and family engagement in healthcare can occur at multiple levels including:

- **Direct Care:** Engaging patients directly in their treatment and care decisions during hospitalization and outpatient visits.
- **Organizational Design and Governance:** Partnering with patients, families, and caregivers to help shape policies and contribute to quality improvement initiatives.
- **Policy Making:** Collaborating with local, state and national stakeholders to influence healthcare policy.

What Patients, Families, Caregivers and Visitors Can Do to Prevent the Spread of Infection:



Ask healthcare providers to clean their hands before providing care, especially when handling a dressing or touching an incision. Hand hygiene is important even when gloves are used.



Avoid touching or manipulating catheters or ventilator tubing.



Ask whether medical devices (e.g. urinary catheters or central lines) are necessary and how long they will remain in place.



Notify healthcare providers if a bandage becomes wet, dirty, or dislodged.



Ensure central line ports are cleaned vigorously for at least 15 seconds before use.



Encourage good oral hygiene. Teeth should be brushed at least twice daily to help prevent pneumonia.



Do not touch surgical wounds or dressings.



If antibiotics are prescribed, ask:

- “Is an antibiotic necessary?”
- “Can recovery occur without it?”
- “What side effects or drug interactions should be expected?”
- “What side effects should be reported?”
- “How do you know what kind of infection this is? It is understood that antibiotics won’t work for viral infections.”



Ask about opportunities to provide feedback or participate in the organization’s Patient and Family Advisory Council.

Upcoming Events

AHRQ Program for CAUTI Prevention

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is recruiting adult intensive care units (ICUs) and non-ICUs to participate in a free, nine-month program aimed at reducing catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) rates in acute care hospitals. [Click here](#) for more information about the program and to sign up for an upcoming informational webinars.

Champions of Change: Celebrating Stewardship Success

In recognition of U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week (USAAW), observed from November 18 – 24, IHA will partner with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to celebrate antimicrobial achievements across Illinois.

Join us on **Tuesday, November 18 at 12:00pm** for a one-hour webinar that will provide updates around IDPH’s Antimicrobial Stewardship Initiatives, recognize the 2025 Acute Care Antimicrobial Stewardship Honor Roll Awardees, and highlight recipients of the Collaboration Distinction Awards. [Click here to register now!](#)

Resources

- 1) Carman, K., Dardess, P., Maurer, M., et. al. “Patient and Family Engagement: A Framework For Understanding The Elements and Developing Interventions and Policies.” *Health Affairs*. vol. 32,2 (2013): <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2012.1133>.
- 2) Infection Prevention & You: <https://infectionpreventionandyou.org/setting-s-of-care/acute-care-hospital/>

MAPS Patient Safety Organization

IHA’s Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) is leading efforts to prevent medical error through resource sharing, education and data collection/analysis. As a certified Patient Safety Organization (PSO) since 2010, MAPS provides full legal privileges, confidentiality and protections for reported patient events. [Click here](#) to learn more about MAPS benefits and how to become a member today.