

The Personal Touch

Spread the word, not the infection. A pound of prevention carries a lot of weight in the battle against our common enemy, Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs). The best way to stop the spread of infection begins, literally, with a personal touch. This is an instance when sharing is the enemy.

We all play a role in our healthcare experience. Ask yourself, does your facility wage an effective battle against HAIs? We can all look to someone else to solve the problem, or we can all be involved — make it personal — to protect our quality of care by reducing the human factors that cause HAIs.

The World Health Organization defines human factors as, “the job, the individual and the organization and how they impact people’s health and safety-related behavior.”¹ What does this mean? It means your role as an individual is just as important in stopping the spread of HAIs as the facility and every healthcare worker in every corner of the healthcare environment.

How does your facility protect you, as a visitor, as an employee, as a contractor? Here are 10 tips to help ALL of us effectively battle HAIs.

1. http://www.who.int/patientsafety/research/methods_measures/human_factors/en/

10 Tips to Battle Healthcare-Associated Infections

1 We all play a role in infection control.
Be a champion of infection control by dedicating a system-wide process for communication with all patients, visitors, and staff including documented strategies for infection-control improvements.

2 Education is key.
Train on best practices and hand-washing techniques specific for the who, what, when, and where of every role. Hand-washing diligence is a must for all providers and visitors with any patient contact. Did you wash your hands well today?

3 Share information.
Communicate and insist on the acknowledgment of changes to policies and best-practice procedures quickly.

4 Integrate across all venues and people.
Staff, patients, and visitors are constantly moving within and between facilities for procedures and treatments. Display a consistent message across all areas.

5 Fight germs on every front.
Anyone can bring germs into a hospital. Monitor and verify that every role, including all departments and patient visitors, is onboard with protective measures and is effectively educated in infection control.

6 Monitor for missing immunizations.
Immunizations are critical in the fight against HAIs. Be sure your staff, vendors, contract personnel, administrative staff, volunteers, and even patient visitors are aware that immunizations are the best method to protect their patients and loved ones.

7 Onboard new personnel quickly and effectively.
Fast onboarding assessments and completion of needed training are crucial.

8 Integrate technology.
Interactive technology is more memorable than signage. Use the most effective techniques for hand washing and patient-rights instruction.

9 Know who is where and when.
Automated logs can track everyone who enters and exits, supporting proper infection-control strategies to prevent outbreaks with fast and easy communication with everyone in the facility.

10 Trust outsourcing.
Most facilities have constrained resources available for infection-prevention efforts. Outsourcing the monitoring and verification of compliance to a trusted third party is the answer.