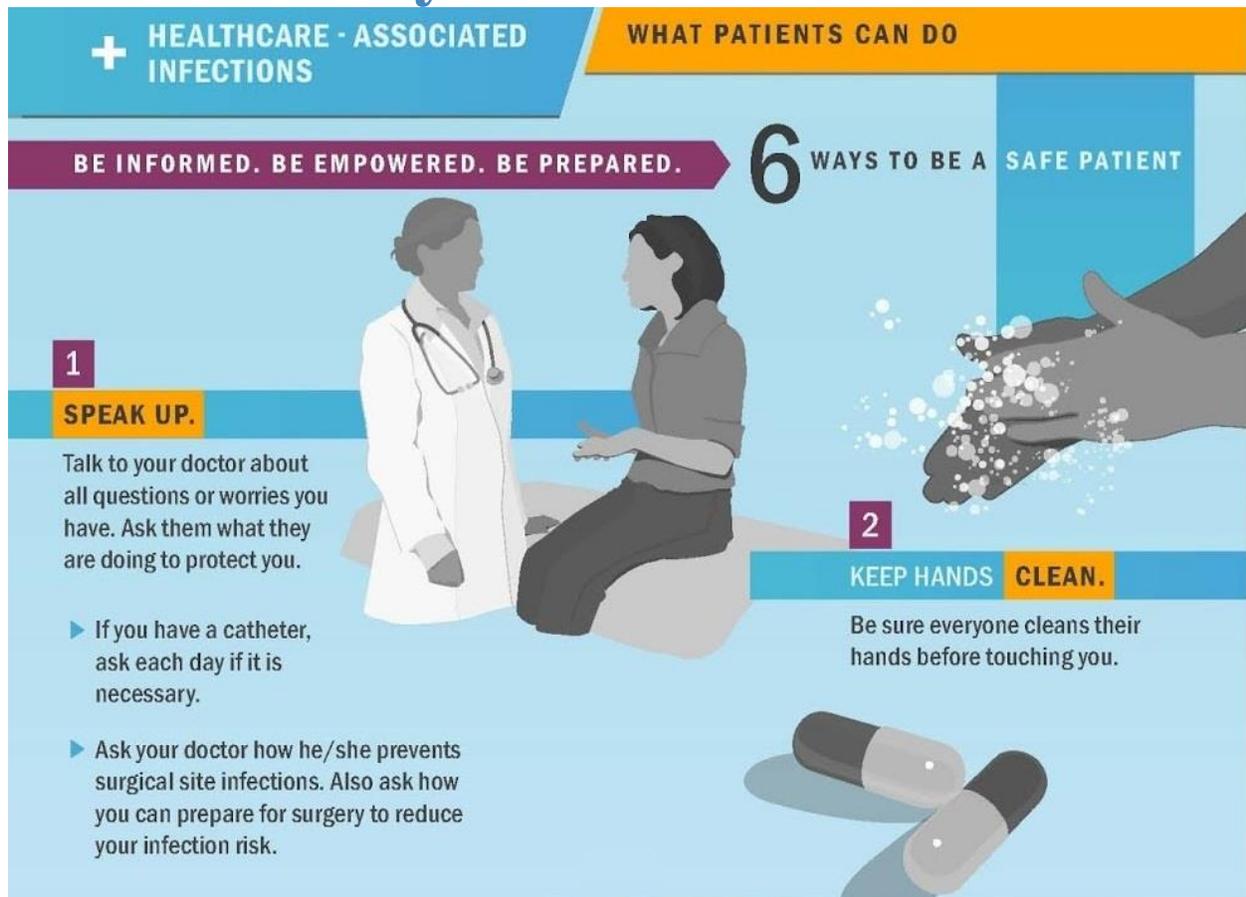


Infographic: Six Ways to Promote Patient Safety



HEALTHCARE - ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

WHAT PATIENTS CAN DO

BE INFORMED. BE EMPOWERED. BE PREPARED.

6 WAYS TO BE A SAFE PATIENT

1 SPEAK UP.

Talk to your doctor about all questions or worries you have. Ask them what they are doing to protect you.

- ▶ If you have a catheter, ask each day if it is necessary.
- ▶ Ask your doctor how he/she prevents surgical site infections. Also ask how you can prepare for surgery to reduce your infection risk.

2 KEEP HANDS CLEAN.

Be sure everyone cleans their hands before touching you.

Minimize the Risk of Healthcare-Associated Infections

Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) are a significant concern for both patients and healthcare providers.

HAIs compromise patients' treatment plans and recoveries — particularly for those who are post-op, have [chronic health conditions](#), or compromised immune systems. HAIs, like C. diff and MRSA, are often difficult and costly to treat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently completed their National and State Healthcare-Associated Infections Progress Report. Here are their findings as well as six ways patients can minimize their risk of contracting HAIs.

Key Findings

One of the CDC's goals is to implement [policies and procedures](#) that will stop the spread of HAIs. In doing so, there will be better patient outcomes and the burden on healthcare providers and facilities will be minimized.

For example, in 2011, there were approximately [722,000 HAIs in U.S. acute care hospitals](#), or the equivalent of 1 in 25 patients. About 75,000 patients who contracted an HAI died during their hospital stay.

The most recent report pooled 2014 national and state-level data from acute care hospitals. They evaluated the following types of infections:

1. central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI),
2. catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI),
3. surgical site infections (SSI),
4. hospital-onset Clostridium difficile infections (C. difficile), and
5. hospital-onset methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteremia (bloodstream infections)

On a national level, there was a decrease in the majority of infection types. Between 2008 and 2014, the rates decreased by:

1. 50 percent for CLABSI
2. 17 percent for abdominal hysterectomy SSI
3. 2 percent for colon surgery SSI

Between 2011 and 2014, there was an 8 percent decrease in C. diff infections and a 13 percent decrease in MRSA infections.

Minimize Risks

Research has shown that healthcare facilities can minimize the occurrence of HAIs by strictly following appropriate best practices and guidelines. It's been demonstrated that [an estimated 70 percent reduction in infection rates](#) is possible.

Additionally, patients should follow these six steps to protect against HAIs:

- 1. Speak up.** Ask your doctor or care providers how they are protecting you from infection.
- 2. Keep hands clean.** Make sure all healthcare workers cleans their hands before touching you.
- 3. Get smart about antibiotics.** Ask your doctor if testing will be done to confirm that the correct antibiotic is prescribed.
- 4. Know the signs and symptoms of infection.** Infections present differently – know the signs and symptoms of the most common ones.
- 5. Watch out for deadly diarrhea.** Report any ongoing episodes of diarrhea to your physician.
- 6. Protect yourself.** Avoid complications by opting to receive vaccinations for potentially life-threatening infections.

To see each state's infection rates, check out the [full CDC report](#). The CDC also released a handy [infographic](#) about preventing the spread of HAIs. You can find that below.

How did your state rate? What steps do you take to prevent HAIs?

+ HEALTHCARE - ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

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6 WAYS TO BE A SAFE PATIENT

1

SPEAK UP.

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- ▶ If you have a catheter, ask each day if it is necessary.
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2

KEEP HANDS CLEAN.

Be sure everyone cleans their hands before touching you.



3

GET SMART ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS.

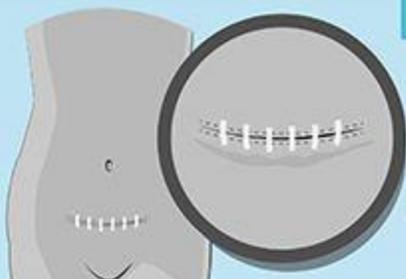
Ask if tests will be done to make sure the right antibiotic is prescribed.



4

KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION.

Some skin infections, such as MRSA, appear as redness, pain, or drainage at an IV catheter site or surgery site. Often these symptoms come with a fever. Tell your doctor if you have these symptoms.



5

WATCH OUT FOR DEADLY DIARRHEA. (AKA *C. difficile*)

Tell your doctor if you have 3 or more diarrhea episodes in 24 hours, especially if you have been taking an antibiotic.



6

PROTECT YOURSELF.

Get vaccinated against flu and other infections to avoid complications.



About the Author



Manny Oliverrez

Manny Oliverrez, CPC, is a 20-year healthcare veteran and the CEO and co-founder of Capture Billing, a medical billing services company located outside of Washington, D.C. He teaches the nation's physicians, administrators, and medical practices how to maximize billing and revenue cycle management processes. Manny also frequently posts articles and videos on his [award-winning healthcare blog](#). For more information on Manny and his company, please visit [his website](#), or call (703)327-1800. And if you're on [LinkedIn](#), please look for him there too. **READ MORE**

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