

## What is being done to prevent infections?

At Peninsula Health, we work to stop the spread of infection by taking the following precautions. You can also continue to do some of these simple measures when you go home, such as:

- Washing hands with either soap and water or using the alcohol hand rubs provided
- Using special equipment like gloves and aprons to prevent contamination of clothing and hands
- Regular cleaning of the environment to prevent a build-up of germs
- Separating those people with an infection to prevent the spread of resistant germs
- Using antibiotics carefully to prevent the development of resistant germs.

## Who can I contact to ask questions about HAI?

The best people to talk to are your GP or the medical team looking after you.

They can explain your condition, treatment and talk about what to expect.

## Who can I contact?

**Your medical team or the Infection Prevention and Control Unit**  
Level 3, Building C Frankston Hospital

Phone: (03) 9784 7722  
Fax: (03) 9784 7576

**Office Hours:**  
Monday to Friday 8.00am – 4.30pm  
(Excluding Public Holidays & Weekends)

**Disclaimer:** The information contained in this brochure is intended to support not replace discussion with your doctor or health care professionals.

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# Healthcare Associated Infections

What we can all do to prevent them

Information for patients and visitors



## What are Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI)?

HAI are infections that occur following any health care episode, whether in a hospital, nursing home, GP clinic or even your own home.

HAI can be caused by a variety of germs, most often from your own normal germs growing on your skin or in your gut.

Some germs that are in the environment either inside or outside the hospital can also cause a HAI, especially when someone is very sick and their immune system is weakened.

HAI can make you sicker or delay your recovery and make any hospital stay longer.

## Are HAIs preventable?

It is not possible to prevent all HAI. Experts believe that up to 50% of HAI may be preventable.

## Why do patients can get HAI?

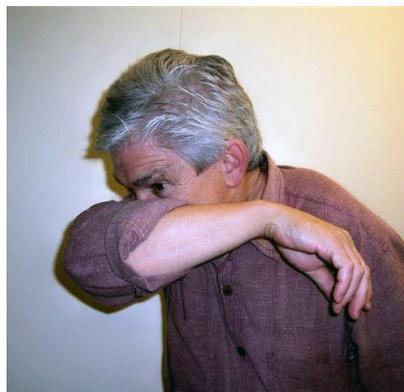
While anyone can develop an infection following health care, some people are more at risk. The sicker a person is and the more medical care they require, the higher their risk of infection. This can include:

- People with weakened immunity due to cancer treatment or those who have had a transplant

- People who have had major surgery, burns or a serious accident
- People who are in hospital for a long time and who have intravenous lines and catheters for long periods.

## What Important precautions can you take to protect yourself and others? :

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use the alcoholic hand rubs provided across all Peninsula Health sites.
- Don't be afraid to ask staff caring for you to wash their hands, as well as any visitors.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue (or lean into your elbow if you do not have a tissue) when you cough or sneeze.



- Advise friends and relatives not to visit if they are sick with fever, colds, influenza, vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Discourage your visitors sitting on the beds or using patient toilets. There are designated public toilets available.

- You are a partner in your own health care. So speak up and ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.
- Inform your medical team of any medications you are taking, even those you buy over the counter they may be relevant.
- If you have diabetes, ask your medical team about the best way to manage your blood sugar levels.

## Let the staff know if you develop:

- Redness or swelling around your Intravenous site or wound
- Diarrhoea or vomiting, especially if taking antibiotics.

## Medications

Antibiotics are powerful medications to treat infections. However, the misuse of antibiotics can lead to resistance in germs, which makes future infections more difficult to treat.

Antibiotics are not effective for virus infections. If your doctor does not prescribe an antibiotic, it is because they do not think it will be effective.

Always take the full course of antibiotics even when you start to feel better. Never save any for another time or take some that are left over without seeing your doctor as they may not be effective and this causes antibiotic resistance to develop.