



Patient Information on Healthcare associated Infections

Patient Information

What are healthcare associated infections?

Healthcare associated infections, (HAI's) are infections that patients get whilst being cared for in a healthcare facility. These HAI's are caused by microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses.

How do HAI's occur?

HAI's are an ever present factor in every health system. I-MED Radiology follows a suite of infection control procedures, and clinical sites participate in regular audits and training to ensure that these processes are followed to minimise the risk of HAI's for patients.

Despite these efforts, some patients are more vulnerable to getting an infection because they are very sick or have had an operation. Patients may also be of greater risk if they:

- Have broken skin areas, like a wound or a device like a catheter or IV line inserted.
- Have underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes.
- Are very young or very old.
- Have a weakened or compromised immune system.

Other reasons HAI's occur can be due to the procedure type, and the clinical work area. Correct aseptic techniques and good cleaning and disinfecting processes are important in reducing the risk of HAI's. I-MED Radiology promotes good aseptic technique and effective cleaning by both staff and contractors of all I-MED clinics.

Can HAI's be prevented?

I-MED Radiology and staff work to reduce the risk patients acquiring HAI's by:

- Encouraging hand hygiene by everyone that enters an I-MED clinic. Keeping the healthcare environment clean.
- Wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves, aprons and masks, as appropriate for the procedure.
- Complying with aseptic techniques whenever completing any procedures that enter a sterile part of the body. These include procedures such as cannulation or biopsies.

- Using disposable single use medical devices whenever possible.
- Using correct aseptic technique whenever completing invasive procedures.
- Sterilising and/or high level disinfecting reusable invasive medical devices such as ultrasound probes.
- Providing post procedure care and information should an infection occur.
- Providing staff education and training on infection control to minimise the risk of HAI's.

The objective of I-MED Radiology is to prevent HAI's where ever possible.

Hand hygiene:

Hand hygiene has been identified as the most important action in reducing the spread of infections. The I-MED Network has hand hygiene products located at reception desks and in toilet facilities. If you would like to access hand hygiene products while in our care, please ask our staff. If you are concerned that I-MED staff have not performed hand hygiene, please feel free to ask them about this practice.

How can I help?

As a patient:

- Always participate in hand hygiene while at I-MED clinics
- Let the staff know if you are carrying any existing infections such as MRSA so that they can protect themselves and others from cross contamination.
- Keep any wounds covered and dry.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or your elbow. Follow the instructions provided by I-MED staff after an invasive procedure on looking after your wounds. If you are not sure please contact us.
- Ask our staff about how we work to prevent infection if you are concerned at any time.

Carers and family:

Everyone that accompanies you to an I-MED appointment should be encouraged to participate in hand hygiene whilst visiting any I-MED clinic. If others are involved in any part of your healthcare, hand hygiene should be part of this process; see the HHA five moments of hygiene, <http://www.hha.org.au/home/5-moments-for-hand-hygiene.aspx>, for more detailed information.

What to look for?

Infections can present in a number of ways. If you are concerned that you may have a HAI after a visit to an I-MED clinic you should visit your doctor as soon as possible. Please also let us know of your concerns by logging an online feedback form [HERE](#) or contacting your local I-MED clinic.

Symptoms of infections can include:

- Redness, pain or drainage at a wound or catheter site
- Sometimes a fever
- Diarrhoea

Where can I find more information?

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare has information on preventing and controlling healthcare associated infections. <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/>

Hand Hygiene Australia has information on the important of hand hygiene. <http://www.hha.org.au/>

Consumer guides are available on specific healthcare associated infections from the NHRMC website.

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

References:

- Healthcare Associated Infections Consumer Factsheet https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_brochure.pdf?
- Standard 3 Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections - Safety and Quality Improvement guide. <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications/safety-and-quality-improvement-guide-standard-3-preventing-and-controlling-healthcare-associated-infections-october-2012/>
- Hand Hygiene Australia- Types of Healthcare associated Infections <http://www.hha.org.au/forconsumers/factsheets.aspx>
- World Health Association - Patient Safety - Health care- associated infections factsheet: http://www.who.int/gpsc/country_work/gpsc_ccisc_fact_sheet_en.pdf
- CDC - Healthcare Associated Infections - What Patients can do. <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/patientsafety/patient-safety.html>

It is very important that you discuss the results with the doctor whom referred you so that they can explain what the results mean for you.

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