

OVERVIEW FOR INFECTION CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

More than 1.5 million people reside in U.S. nursing facilities. In recent years the acuity of nursing facility residents has increased and therefore they have a higher risk for developing nosocomial infections. The term "nosocomial" is an institutional associated infection (infectious agent) typically found in acute care hospitals and nursing facilities where there is a susceptible host (compromised patient/resident) and a means of transmission.

It is well known that the elderly population has a substantially increased incidence and severity of many infectious diseases. Vulnerability to infection is due partly to an aging related decline in immunologic function. Antibody production declines with age.

The most common infections found in nursing facilities are urinary tract infections (UTI's), respiratory infections (influenza, pneumonia), skin and soft tissue infections (infected pressure ulcers), gastroenteritis, and conjunctivitis.

The following recommended Best Practices for infection control focus on four key areas:

1. Prevention
 - Immunization education
 - Handwashing
 - Screening for TB - employees and residents
2. Accurate Assessment and Diagnosis
 - In-service of all staff
 - Clinical Management Algorithm - Step by step process for assessment, documentation, physician notification, treatment initiation, care plan update and evaluation.
 - Use of Signs and Symptom card pocket laminates
3. Facility Resources and Management System
 - Infection Control Resource notebook
 - Designation of an Individual to manage the facility infection control program

continued...

4. C.Q.I. (Q.A.&A Committee)

- Ongoing Infection Control data tracking, trending and prevention
- Review all department infection control practices
- Record audits - resident and employee records
- Periodical review of policies and procedure
- Prevention programs - screening, immunization, flu season awareness program, etc.