

## Infection Prevention & Control in Home Healthcare

Infection prevention and control is a critical aspect of patient care in all healthcare settings. A study of almost 200,000 home healthcare patients showed that approximately 3.5 percent of them developed infections that led to emergency treatment or hospitalization while being treated by home healthcare organizations.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, 17 percent of unplanned hospitalizations among home healthcare patients were caused by infections.<sup>2</sup>

Managing the risks that infections and infectious diseases present to patients' health and well-being should be a top priority for home healthcare agencies/organizations. Part of a commitment to providing safe, high-quality, home-based care requires having infection prevention and control initiatives in place for home healthcare staff. Strong infection prevention and control efforts include executing and monitoring these initiatives as well as training and educating staff, which may help reduce organizational risk and decrease costs.

Various considerations are included in this checklist.<sup>3</sup> Home healthcare agencies/organizations may find reviewing this checklist beneficial when self-evaluating their infection prevention and control efforts. It may also allow them to pinpoint any gaps in guidance or areas for improvement.

	Yes	No
<i>Culture of Safety</i>		
Do organizational leaders support a culture of safety in which staff members are empowered to remind others about infection prevention and control and raise concerns without fear of punitive action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the organization designated individuals to implement infection prevention and control activities and monitoring? Are these individuals appropriately trained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization's commitment to patient safety require that staff members accept personal responsibility for infection prevention and control every day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<b><i>Culture of Safety (continued)</i></b>		
When infection prevention and control lapses occur, are the incidents investigated and are corrective actions taken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization have a process for collecting, reviewing, and acting on data and quality measures related to infection prevention and control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Infection Prevention and Control Program</i></b>		
Does the organization have a written infection prevention and control program that includes evidence-based policies, procedures, and protocols for infection prevention, infection control, monitoring, and communication? Have all staff members in the organization read and signed off on the plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization’s infection prevention and control program include written emergency preparedness protocols for events such as infectious disease outbreaks and natural disasters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the infection prevention and control program include written competencies for infection prevention practices, including staff safety procedures and cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members’ duties, responsibilities, and competencies relative to infection prevention and control included in their job descriptions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the infection prevention and control program require compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocols for collecting, handling, and testing clinical specimens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do organizational leaders and the administrative team stay current on infection prevention and control guidelines and best practices to ensure the organization’s program is up to date and effective?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization assess its infection prevention and control program at least annually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization enact surveillance measures to ensure compliance with the infection prevention and control program? Is compliance documented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<b><i>Training and Education</i></b>		
Are all new staff members (including full-time employees, contractors, and temporary staff) educated about infection prevention and control strategies and techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is education and training on all aspects of infection prevention and control conducted at least annually or according to state and federal requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization provide frequent infection prevention and control updates and reminders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are employees given feedback about their compliance with infection prevention and control protocols?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Antibiotic Stewardship</i></b>		
Does the organization have an antibiotic stewardship plan that defines antibiotic use protocols and a system to monitor antibiotic use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the organization implemented practices to improve antibiotic prescribing and use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization have access to a pharmacist, physician, or other healthcare provider who has expertise in antibiotic prescribing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization along with pharmacy services provide educational resources and materials about antibiotic use and outcomes to nursing staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Occupational Health</i></b>		
Does the organization require adherence to Occupational Safety & Health Administration bloodborne pathogen standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a protocol in place to implement postexposure evaluation and follow-up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization offer annual influenza vaccinations for all staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization maintain written records of staff members' influenza vaccination from the most recent influenza season?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<b><i>Occupational Health (continued)</i></b>		
Does the organization offer hepatitis B vaccinations to staff members at risk of occupational exposure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a tuberculosis (TB) screening required upon hire and annually thereafter (or as required by state law or a risk assessment) for staff members at risk of TB exposure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Hand Hygiene</i></b>		
Does the organization have written hand hygiene policies that are based on best practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are adequate and readily accessible supplies of alcohol-based hand rub always available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are patients and their families encouraged to wash their hands, be mindful of infection prevention and control efforts, and remind home healthcare providers if they think an appropriate action has not been taken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Reusable Medical Instruments and Devices</i></b>		
Are reusable and single-use disposable devices clearly differentiated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do organizational leaders reinforce that single-use disposable devices should not be reused under any circumstance or in any situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the level of sterilization or disinfection needed for each reusable instrument or device been determined (i.e., is the device critical, semi-critical, or noncritical)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization have written policies and procedures for reprocessing reusable devices, including methods for sterilization, high-level disinfection, and low-level disinfection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are policies, procedures, and manufacturer's reprocessing instructions for reusable medical devices posted in reprocessing areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have standards for routine maintenance and cleaning of sterilization equipment (according to manufacturer's instructions) been established?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<b><i>Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter Line and Intravenous Medication Infusion Safety</i></b>		
Does the organization’s infection prevention and control program include protocols for peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) line and intravenous (IV) medication safety, including proper disinfection and flushing of the access port?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff members who perform PICC line and IV medication infusions receive training and competency validation on medication infusion safety procedures? Does training occur upon employment and annually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to medication infusion safety procedures and provide feedback to staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do medication infusion protocols adhere to CDC’s infection control guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are adequate PICC line and IV port safety supplies available at the organization (e.g., single-use needle/needle-less devices and sharps containers)? Are sharps containers removed and replaced immediately when full?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Wound Care</i></b>		
Does the organization have procedures in place for proper wound care, including wound packing and dressing changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members educated about specific products used for wound care packing and dressing changes while employing aseptic and clean practice techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to proper wound care packing and dressing changes and provide feedback to staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Urinary Catheter Placement and Removal</i></b>		
Does the organization have procedures in place for proper insertion and removal of urinary catheters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members educated as to proper sterile/aseptic techniques used for urinary collection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to proper insertion and removal of urinary catheters and provide feedback to staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<b>Respiratory Hygiene</b>		
Does the organization have procedures to limit staff exposure to respiratory secretions from patients who have respiratory infection symptoms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members advised not to see patients if they are exhibiting signs and symptoms of respiratory illnesses or have been recently exposed to someone who has signs and symptoms of a respiratory illness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>		
Does the organization have sufficient and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) available and accessible to staff members (e.g., gloves, face shields, and face masks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members educated about specific clinical conditions for which the use of PPE is required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members taught proper PPE donning and doffing techniques?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is PPE removed and discarded before leaving the patient's home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to PPE use and provide feedback to staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Environmental Cleaning</b>		
Do staff members receive training and competency validation on cleaning/disinfection procedures upon employment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization routinely audit (monitor and document) the quality of cleaning/disinfection practices and provide feedback to staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Resources

- [Home Care and Hospice Conference and Expo: Infection Prevention and Control Surveillance Data: Meeting Regulatory and Accrediting Organizations' Requirements](#)
- [The Joint Commission: Home Care Infection Prevention and Control Resources](#)

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Shang, J., Larson, E., & Stone, P. (2015). Infection in home health care: Results from national Outcome and Assessment Information Set data. *American Journal of Infection Control*, 43(5):454-459.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> This checklist is largely adapted from the following resource: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016, September). Infection prevention and control assessment tool for long-term care facilities (Version 1.3.1). Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/icar/ltcf.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/icar/ltcf.pdf)

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