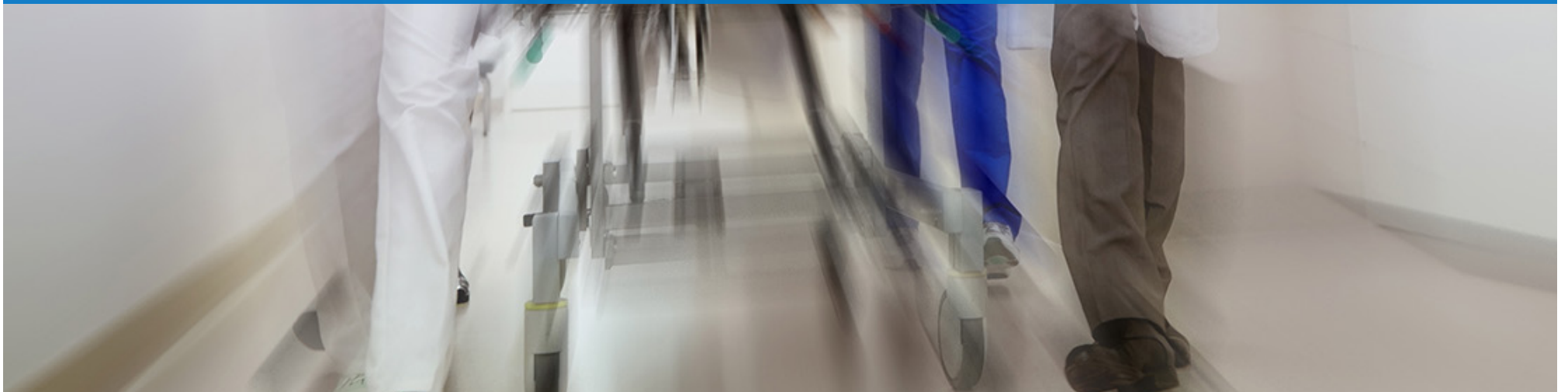


Three Key Workflows & Technology Tips to Track & Eliminate *C. diff*

A two-minute read

ECOLAB[®]



Incidents of Healthcare Acquired Infections (HAIs) not only put patients at risk—they hurt a hospital's bottom line by driving up costs, lengthening patient days, and reducing bed backfill opportunities.¹ *C. diff* is one of the most common microbial causes of HAIs in the U.S. and costs up to \$4.8 billion annually in excess health care costs.²

Why is *C. diff* so pervasive? Its spores are resistant to common disinfectants allowing them to survive the surface disinfection process.³ These unseen pathogens can be continuously transmitted between the patient, environment and hands of the healthcare worker.

To guard against *C. diff*, follow these three key environmental and hand hygiene workflows, and learn technology tips to help ensure your facility breaks the chain of infection and improves patient outcomes.



¹ Financial Impact of Surgical Site Infections on Hospitals JAMA Surg. 2013;148(10):907-914. doi:10.1001/jamasurg.2013.2246

² <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1408913>

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1564025/>

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Key Workflow #1 – Identify and Communicate Risk

C. diff can spread anywhere—from the initial admission to throughout a hospital stay. Your staff should be trained to identify patients exhibiting *C. diff* symptoms. Communication remains key to controlling the spread during complex interactions and location changes in hospitals. Proper protocols should involve:

- Support better testing practices, tracking and reporting of infections and prevention efforts.
- Rapidly identify and isolate patients with *C. diff*.
- Use gowns and gloves when treating patients with *C. diff*.
- Notify other healthcare facilities about infectious diseases when patients transfer, especially between hospitals and long-term care facilities.



TECHNOLOGY TIP

EHRs

One facility used time and location stamps entered into electronic health records (EHRs) to map patient location changes and track where patients could share or be exposed to *C. diff*.⁴

C. diff. bundle bags

One health system created pre-packaged bags containing supplies for staff to use when initiating isolation for suspected or diagnosed *C. diff* patients.⁵

⁴ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2659323>

⁵ <https://www.conehealth.com/app/files/public/7237/11-taking-the-difficulty-out-of-c-diff.pdf>

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Key Workflow #2—Assess Appropriate and Timely Environmental Hygiene

Areas of the hospital with suspected *C. diff* should be cleaned. Your hospital should assess how frequently to clean spaces with active *C. diff* infections and communicate to EVS staff which patients are known or suspected of having *C. diff*. Proper workflows require EVS and nursing staff to:

- Minimize the number of things that need to be done differently when you have a *C. diff* room by using a spore-killing disinfectant that can be used proactively in every patient room - whether its for daily, discharge or isolation cleaning.
- Do not share or reuse towels. Wash any clothes, bedding, or other textiles that might be infected with *C. diff* according to the CDC Guidelines for Laundering Healthcare Linens.⁶
- Identify the high-touch objects that might be contaminated in patient rooms with known or suspected *C. diff* infection.
- Have a process to regularly audit the adequacy of room cleaning so you know before you have an issue where your staff can improve.



TECHNOLOGY TIP

Use a sporicidal disinfectant

Spores are very hard to kill with common disinfectants. Instead, hospitals must use a sporicidal disinfectant or bleach to remove *C. diff* from hospital surfaces.

Both are effective but be sure to check material compatibility to ensure daily cleaning will not degrade other assets.

For example:

Ecolab® OxyCide™ Daily Disinfectant Cleaner standardizes and simplifies processes with one product for daily, discharge and isolation cleaning and its favorable material compatibility helps minimize surface damage.

Patient room monitoring programs

Patient room monitoring systems provide objective evaluation of critical cleaning outcomes. Data is often reported through dynamic dashboards that can help with tracking trends, optimizing performance and changing staff behavior.

The Ecolab Patient Room Program provides a daily defense against *C. diff* and other HAIs via a complete program that sets new standards for a clean, safe environment by blending technology, information, service and training.

⁶ <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>

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Key Workflow #3—Implement Hand Hygiene Practices

Practicing good hand hygiene is key to mitigating the spread of *C. diff*. The average clinician washes or sanitizes his or her hands less than half as often as required by the CDC and WHO guidelines. Because alcohol hand gels won't work against *C. diff*, staff must wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Ensure your teams follow proper hand hygiene by:

- Make product changes so soap is the only option in *C. diff* rooms and measure compliance around *C. diff* beds.
- Use hand hygiene compliance monitoring systems to regularly assess if staff members continuously use soap and water to properly perform appropriate hand hygiene after caring for patients.
- Develop a process to provide quick feedback for improvement to all staff that come into contact with *C. diff* patient.
- Implement new signage or send out hand washing videos across the hospital as a reminder about proper hand hygiene. Handwashing compliance is greater when signs encouraging handwashing are posted.⁷

⁷ Larson E, Friedman C, Cohran J et al. Prevalence and correlates of skin damage on the hands of nurses. Heart Lung. 1997 Sep-Oct;26(5):404-12.



TECHNOLOGY TIP

Electronic hand hygiene compliance monitoring systems

Hand hygiene compliance monitoring programs serve as coaching tools to remind health care workers of critical hand-washing events while monitoring and reporting compliance. These passive systems take no additional time out of a busy health care worker's day and are not subject to human error or manipulation.

The ECRI Institute recently evaluated a variety of systems and shared its results: If you are a member of ECRI, you can access their report of systems published in December 2017 <https://www.ecri.org/components/HDS/Pages/default.aspx>

GUARD AGAINST *C. DIFF.*

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Contact us today to learn more about how to implement these workflows and products into your hospital program:

www.ecolab.com/healthcareinsightscenter