



Reducing Your Risk For Infection In Hospitals

(NAPSA)—A new survey conducted by *Infection Control Today* and sponsored by CareFusion Corp., of 1,500 hospital-based health care professionals, reveals that when it comes to preparing a patient's skin before a surgical procedure, there is a gap between what guidelines say and what health care professionals actually do.

Despite ranking guidelines as the most important consideration for selecting a skin prep product, 33 percent of health care professionals said they do not follow guidelines in how they reduce bacteria on a patient's skin before a procedure.

In the United States, health care-associated infections (HAIs) are a major public health concern, with an estimated 1.7 million cases each year.

But what is an HAI exactly? It is an infection that a patient did not have before being admitted to a health care facility, such as a hospital, but got after 48 hours of admittance. One source of HAIs is the introduction of naturally occurring bacteria and other microorganisms from the skin into a patient's bloodstream or surgical incision.

Studies show patients who develop HAIs have longer hospital stays, use more health care resources, and are at greater risk for



Reducing the risk of HAIs requires appropriate skin prep before all medical procedures.

readmission and death. It is well known in the medical community that a key factor in reducing the risk of developing these infections is following guidelines to appropriately reduce bacteria on the patient's skin before all medical procedures, especially surgery.

“Given that microorganisms on patients' skin are a primary cause of HAIs, skin antisepsis should be a top priority for hospitals,” said Allan Morrison Jr., MD, MSc, FACP, FIDSA, professor and distinguished senior fellow at George Mason University in the School of Public Policy.

For skin prep, a product containing chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) is recommended by at least 18 organizations and initiatives, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health. Specifically, 10 organizations advocate for the use of a 2 percent CHG formulation, such as ChlorPrep® patient preoperative skin prep (2 percent chlorhexidine gluconate and 70 percent isopropyl alcohol).

How can patients help reduce their risk of HAIs?

- Don't be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse about what measures they have in place to reduce the risk of infections, particularly what will be used to reduce bacteria on your skin.
- If you don't see your doctors wash their hands, remind them to do so. And remember to wash your own hands regularly, and ask your visitors to do so as well.
- Ask your doctor if there are precautions you can take before coming to the facility, such as bathing with a specific product.
- Research the infection rates of the facility before choosing where to have your procedure/medical care. Soon, all health care facilities will be required to publish their infection rates and many are doing so already.