Intoduction Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs)

Although significant progress has been made in preventing health-care-acquired infections (HAIs), additional steps need to be taken to control and mitigate this high risk of infection. HAIs are preventable and often caused by poor hospital conditions or human error.
In an effort to reduce the overwhelming number of HAIs that occur annually and to improve patient safety, all personnel working in a healthcare facility should follow these risk management methods in every corner of the facility.

Credit: http://ehstoday.com/health/risk-management-keeping-diseases-out-healthcare-facilities

Preventions

1. Establish a communications plan for monitoring adherence to infection control guidelines.
When a facility outlines and defines infection control strategies for its staff and vendors to follow, work can be done in a timely and effective manner. This allows infection prevention personnel to monitor that all work being done within the facility ensures the safety of its patients.
2. Map out high-traffic areas of the facility.
With maintenance vendors constantly moving about a healthcare facility, the facility manager should be responsible for relaying the map of populated areas to its vendors so that vendors are aware of where the most at-risk patients are, specifically those with immuno-compromised systems. It is more likely for a patient to acquire an HAI in high-traffic areas.
3. Minimize the number of entry areas.
Reducing the number of entrances that vendor employees use to enter a healthcare facility will minimize the risk of spreading potential bacteria to all staff and patients inside. Entering a hospital wing with dirty shoes from a construction site tracks multiple types of bacteria into the facility and disturbs patient safety. With the possibly of multiple vendors unsafely coming into contact with patients, healthcare facilities should limit access into the building and designate a vendor entry that requires every vendor to sign in.. **4. Track all air flow patterns and pressure levels.**
Airborne infections account for 17-20 percent of HAIs. Locate and monitor airflow levels and pressure balances throughout a facility's HVAC system to minimize the risk of microorganisms contaminating the indoor air quality. Controlling indoor air quality minimizes the intrusion of dust and moisture from construction sites into high-risk patient areas. This in turn helps maintain a safe environment for everyone in the facility.

Hospital Acquired Infections



Preventions Continued

5. Be aware of governing healthcare association requirements.
Vendor knowledge of infection control training recommended or required by healthcare governing bodies – such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and OSHA – is essential in improving hospital efficiency. The standards identified in these documents and training courses are designed to keep patients and staff safe in every environment.
6. Implement facility-wide infection control training.
Facilitate a hospital-wide training model that can be accessed by vendors 24/7 to ensure that the staff is well-educated to make a difference and improve patient care. Address issues that healthcare staff members encounter on a daily basis to eliminate reoccurrence. Every vendor employee that enters the hospital should have completed the training courses and learned about their role in HAI prevention.
7. Surveil and record all construction and renovation work.
Documenting all maintenance projects will safeguard a facility's compliance for patient safety. Without proper maintenance records, a facility could be liable in the event of a patient acquiring an HAI.

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