

The environment in health care is a reservoir for microorganisms. Controlling the environment in health care facilities has been shown to help reduce infections.

Structure and design of a health care facility

Elements of structure and design that help to control the spread of infection in the environment include:

- single rooms with bathrooms
- Engineering Controls
 - heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
 - physical barriers such as curtains and cough-and-sneeze guards
 - point-of-care sharps containers
 - hand hygiene equipment
 - dedicated hand washing sinks
 - hand hygiene product dispensers

Health care workers who do not work in a health care facility may need to:

- adapt how they provide care based on the client environment
- consider carrying portable sharps containers and alcohol-based hand rub

Accommodation and placement

The structure of a health care facility is one of the factors that influence decisions about special accommodation and placement. The appropriate placement and accommodation of clients/patients/residents helps to minimize the risk of transmission of infectious agents.

Health care worker actions

The actions that the health care worker can take to control the environment and help reduce the transmission of infection are:

- handling linen, waste and dishes according to guidelines and procedures
- cleaning the environment and medical equipment/devices as per protocols
- using safety-engineered needles and devices safely