STOP
HEALTH CARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

Ontarians trust that health care facilities are clean and safe places that will help them get better when they are sick. Yet some people acquire health care-associated infections (HAIs) that can cause illness, complications or even death. Prevention and control of these infections in hospitals, long-term care homes and clinics is key to keeping patients safe.

BREAKING DOWN THE NUMBERS

Ontario hospitals report cases of CDI and bloodstream infections caused by MRSA and VRE. These rates provide a strong indicator of overall trends, even if they are a small per cent of the total number of health care-associated infections. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, cases of MRSA in hospitals increased sharply, CDI became a greater concern and VRE emerged as a new threat to patient safety. Thanks in part to infection prevention and control efforts, reported rates of these infections have been relatively stable over the last five years.  

Annual rates of HAIs in hospitals  

In the past five years, CDI outbreak control in Ontario hospitals has improved patient safety, leading to better patient outcomes. There has been a decrease in the total number of outbreaks each year, the number of patients involved in each outbreak and the mortality during outbreaks.

CDI outbreaks in hospitals  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of outbreaks</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td># of patients involved</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>% mortality per outbreak</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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PREVENTING HAIs

Comprehensive infection prevention and control measures reduce the incidence and impact of HAIs. These practices include:

- Cleaning hands
- Disinfection and sterilization
- Careful use of antibiotics
- Personal protective equipment, such as gowns and gloves
- Surveillance to monitor and detect cases and outbreaks
- Public reporting by Ontario hospitals on key measures

Of all of these practices, cleaning your hands is the single most important measure to prevent HAIs. Clean and safe health care environments are a shared responsibility of health care institutions, health care providers and the public. Continued infection prevention and control efforts along with more comprehensive and robust surveillance are required to continue to reduce the incidence and impact of HAIs.