

## HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

<p><b>What are healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs)?</b></p>	<p>Healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) are infections that are caught as a result of a patient being in a hospital or other type of healthcare facility. This infection was not present, or being incubated, when they were first admitted.</p>
<p><b>What types of HCAIs are there?</b></p>	<p>HCAIs can cause a range of type of infections, from bloodstream infections, urinary tract infections, pneumonia, diarrhoea and wound infections.</p> <p>They include infections such as those caused by <i>Klebsiella</i> and <i>Serratia</i> bacteria.</p> <p>Other common types of HCAI are methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (MRSA), <i>Clostridium difficile</i> (C.dff), norovirus and <i>Escherichia coli</i> (E.Coli) amongst others.</p>
<p><b>Why are they important?</b></p>	<p>According to the World Health Organization, hundreds of millions of people around the world are affected by HCAIs every year.</p> <p>These infections are important as they can lead to longer hospital stays, increased resistance to antibiotics, increased costs for patients and healthcare facilities, and potentially avoidable deaths.</p>
<p><b>Who is at risk of HCAIs?</b></p>	<p>Patients in hospital may be more at risk of catching infections due to other illnesses, decreased immunity and antibiotics treatment. They may also have invasive devices (such as catheters for passing urine or ventilators to help them breathe) or undergo procedures that make it easier for infections to become established, such as surgery.</p> <p>Patients receiving intensive care, including premature or sick newborn babies, may be at greater risk of catching HCAIs as they are often in hospital for long periods, receive a number of antibiotics and undergo procedures to monitor their health.</p>
<p><b>How are HCAIs treated?</b></p>	<p>HCAIs can be caused by a range of bacteria and viruses, and sometimes they can be resistant to certain antibiotic or antiviral drugs. Doctors will work closely with specialists in the laboratory to decide on which course of treatment is best for each patient.</p>
<p><b>How can the spread of HCAIs be prevented?</b></p>	<p>Good infection prevention and control measures are key to preventing the spread of HCAIs. Effective hand hygiene is one of these important measures and is important for staff and visitors alike. This involves washing hands with soap and water, or using alcohol hand gel, when visiting or treating every patient.</p> <p>Healthcare facilities should also have education and training for all staff in infection prevention and control, as well as surveillance systems to monitor for HCAIs and ensure any increases in cases of HCAIs are detected as early as possible.</p>

**CARPHA HEAD OFFICE**

16-18 Jamaica Blvd Federation Park, Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago

T: +1-868-299-0820 E: [postmaster@carpha.org](mailto:postmaster@carpha.org)