Your Safety is Our Calling

The Mission Strategy for Infection Control

Patient safety means everything to us. Sending you home healthy is our first priority, and our highest duty. That means we're committed to preventing infections in our hospital.

Our infection-prevention roster has 6 full-time nurse specialists, plus an expert physician who consults with them for 100 hours every month.

These specialists partner with Allied Medical, a healthcare consultancy, to follow a protocol called the **Guidance for SSI Reduction and Infection Prevention** (GRIP).

The GRIP program entails carefully examining the latest infection control research, and using it to improve our processes. This could mean refining our procedures, or investing in new technology, or even upgrading the hospital itself. Whatever it takes – we're dedicated to keeping you safe.

The work is continuous. We'll never stop improving. And our efforts have been rewarded with better outcomes for our patients. In fact, for the first 3 quarters of 2016, our Orthopedic Surgery unit had no infections at all.

State and Federal agencies have taken notice. The Joint Commission, a national accrediting organization, called us "an exemplary model" of infection management. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services published a report about our work, so that other hospitals might learn from our example.

Below you can read about how we achieved these remarkable results.

OPEN DIALOGUE

Communication is the most important tool we have to combat infection. We structure our staff to facilitate open conversations.

Each infection-control nurse takes charge of a functional unit in the hospital. They immerse themselves in the unit's culture and operations, and they engage one-on-one with the clinicians on the floor. The dialogue between them brings transparency to infection risks.

These productive conversations put the data out in the open – like a scoreboard our clinicians can check as they work. This inspires them to rise to the challenge, and embrace the mission of patient safety.

HAND HYGIENE

We consider every possible detail, no matter how small. Recently in the Medical / Surgical unit, for instance, our staff carefully deliberated hand-washing stations. They swapped out older, alcohol-based sanitizers and replaced them with foaming ones. Then they strategically mounted the new sanitizers at eye-level, in locations where staff couldn't possibly miss them. These changes meant cleaner hands, and safer patients. **Hand-washing compliance went from 60% to 95%.** [1]

RETHINKING STERILIZATION

Clean tools matter almost as much as clean hands.

Instrument sterilization is a complex procedure. Sterilization workers must follow protocols exactly, and there's little margin for error.

We wanted to eliminate missteps. First, we created a dedicated Sterilization Department – **one of the first in the country**. This gathered sterilization work from all [n?] hospital units into one, central location, giving us better control over the process.

Then, we invested heavily in new instruments, **spending over $1 million dollars**[2] to double the number of tools in circulation. This guaranteed more manageable sterilization loads, and cleaner instruments in the hospital.

These strategies worked. Surgical Site Infections at Mission Hospital have plummeted – down to **just 1 infection in 2016**. That's well below national standards.

THE OPERATING ROOM ATMOSPHERE

Operating rooms demand precise atmospheric conditions. Temperatures must range between 68°F and 75°F, and humidity between 20% and 60%.[3] To ensure optimal conditions, we installed a **brand new $1.5 million dollar HVAC system**[4].

And we didn't stop there. We also outfitted each room with **new laminar flow systems**. Bacteria flourish in stagnant, moist air. Laminar flow keeps air moving,

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[1] Inteview with Joyce, January 4 2016
[2] Interview with Wendy Ferro-Grant, January 5 2016
[3] https://www.aorn.org/guidelines/clinical-resources/clinical-faqs/environment-of-care
[4] Orange County Register, "Mission Hospital kept operating rooms open after unsound conditions uncovered", October 26, 2014, http://www.ocregister.com/articles/hospital-639131-mission-operating.html

circulating it in a continuous cycle of filtration and replenishment. The clean, flowing air prevents bacteria from forming colonies.

HIGH-TECH SOLUTIONS

When a procedure ends, environmental service workers give the operating room a thorough cleaning. They use a powerful anti-microbial agent called **OxyCide** to scrub every single surface in the room.

But to guarantee that no dangerous pathogens remain, they send in the **Tru-D Smart UVC**. For half an hour, this sterilization robot bathes the entire room with intense ultra-violet light, destroying microbes on any surface. It even **kills very resilient "superbugs"**, like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).[5]

ENLISTING YOU

Finally, perhaps our most important effort in preventing infections has been to reach out to patients like you.

We developed new pre-surgery classes for patients, as well as pre- and post-surgery safety kits. These kits contain bathing supplies, and exact instructions on how to use them. They'll help answer any questions you have about the surgical process, and they'll give you lifestyle guidelines for a safe surgery and recovery.

Please know: you play a pivotal role in keeping yourself and other patients safe from infection. To learn more about this, please visit our **Patient Education** page.

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[5] https://corporate.dukehealth.org/news-listing/cleaning-hospital-rooms-chemicals-uv-rays-cuts-superbug-transmissions