

Hospital Acquired Infections

Hospital acquired infections, (HAIs, also known as health care-associated infections or nosocomial infections) are infections that patients acquire during the course of receiving treatment for other conditions within a health care setting, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Listed below are some HAIs referenced in statutes, along with their definitions.

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA): A serious and potentially fatal infection caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria (often called "Staph") that is resistant to the broad-spectrum antibiotics commonly used to treat it. These antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin. In the community, most MRSA infections are skin infections. More severe or potentially life-threatening MRSA infections occur most frequently among patients in health care settings.

Clostridium difficile (C. diff): A serious and potentially life-threatening overgrowth of bacteria in the colon, usually caused by antibiotic use. It can cause diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions such as colitis.

Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE): A form of intestinal bacteria which is not sensitive to the antibiotic, vancomycin. This bacteria is normally present in the human intestines and in the female genital tract and are often found in the environment, and can sometimes cause infections. Vancomycin is often used to treat these infections, but some enterococci have become resistant to this drug. Most VRE infections occur in hospitals.

Central line associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI): A bloodstream infection thought to have been caused by the presence of a central line. A central line is a catheter (tube) that is passed through a vein to end up in the thoracic (chest) portion of the vena cava (the large vein returning blood to the heart) or in the right atrium of the heart. A central venous line is also called a central venous catheter. Sometimes, the 'venous' is omitted and it is called a central line or central catheter.

Surgical site infections (SSI): An infection of the tissue in or around a surgical wound. A SSI can occur when bacteria from the skin, other parts of the body or the environment enter the incision made by the surgeon and multiply in the tissues. To be considered a surgical site infection, the infection must occur within 30 days after surgery. Types of surgical sites can include *orthopedic* surgical sites, *cardiac* surgical sites, and *gastrointestinal* surgical sites designated as clean and clean-contaminated.

Clean: elective, not emergency, non-traumatic, no acute inflammation; no break in technique; respiratory, gastrointestinal, biliary and genitourinary tracts not entered.

Clean-contaminated: Urgent or emergency case that is otherwise clean; elective opening of respiratory, gastrointestinal, biliary or genitourinary tract with minimal spillage (e.g. appendectomy) not encountering infected urine or bile; minor technique break.