

Stay safe when you're getting care

You go to a hospital or doctor's office to get healthy. But sometimes you can get sick in these places. There is a risk for getting an infection in health care facilities. This is called a health care-associated infection. Talking to your doctor can help you to reduce your risk. You can also take steps to make yourself less likely to be infected.



Photo above by Kali9, below by Gangliu, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on infections:

1 Know your risks. Some people are more likely to be infected in a health care setting. People with weak immune systems, who have just had surgery or who are already sick are at a higher risk.



2 Germs can be in many places. Risky spots are places where you have had surgery, or from devices put on or in your body if they have not been cleaned well.

3 Health care workers can protect patients by following safety rules, including washing their hands. It is OK to ask your doctor to wash their hands. If you are worried, talk about it with staff.

4 Follow the instructions given to you for before and after your visit to your health care team. If you feel pain, or if you have diarrhea or a fever, contact your doctor right away.

5 Medicine can help. Getting vaccinated can protect you against pneumonia. Use antibiotics the way your doctor tells you, and use the whole dose that is given.



>> For more information on health care-associated infections, visit www.cdc.gov/hai.