



## 3 PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTION

This standard aims to improve infection prevention and control measures to help prevent infections and the spread of antimicrobial resistance through the appropriate prescribing and use of antimicrobials.

### Why the standard is important

Healthcare-associated infections are the most common complication affecting patients in hospitals. In Australian healthcare settings, large numbers of patients are treated in close proximity to each other. They often undergo invasive procedures, have medical devices inserted and receive broad-spectrum antibiotics or immunosuppressive therapies. These conditions provide ideal opportunities for the adaption and spread of pathogenic, infectious organisms.

Healthcare-associated infections complicate patient recovery and increase healthcare costs by increasing the length of hospital stays, and the treatment and care required. In addition, there is the increasing problem of organisms that are resistant to current antimicrobial treatments.

Many healthcare-associated infections are preventable. Infection prevention and control practices, such as hand hygiene, the use of personal protective equipment, equipment disinfection, environmental cleaning and vaccination are recognised as an essential part of an effective response to infection control and antimicrobial resistance. It includes the use of surveillance data to identify resistant organisms, and appropriate prescribing of antimicrobials to reduce the development of resistant organisms.

Successful infection prevention and control requires a collaborative approach and a range of strategies across all levels of the health service organisation. This standard describes this approach and strategies.

### If the standard is in place ...

- There are **systems** to support and promote the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections
- There are systems for the safe and appropriate prescribing and use of antimicrobials, as part of an **antimicrobial stewardship** program
- Patients who have an **infection** or are at risk of infection with an organism of local, national or global significance are identified promptly, and receive appropriate management and treatment
- The health service organisation is **clean**
- Reprocessing of **re-usable medical devices**, equipment and instruments is consistent with relevant current national standards and manufacturer instructions.



## Changes from the first edition

The second edition of the NSQHS Standards streamlines actions and addresses gaps identified in the first edition.

The Preventing and Controlling Healthcare-Associated Infection Standard in the second edition continues its focus on systems and processes that prevent and control healthcare-associated infection, which promote effective prescribing and use of antimicrobials as part of antimicrobial stewardship. Actions related to standard and transmission-based precautions have been brought together, and the wording across the standard has been revised to make the requirements clear.

## Key steps you can take to prepare for the second edition

- Review and strengthen existing governance arrangements for infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship
- Identify how information from the evaluation of infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship programs is fed into the organisation's quality and safety systems
- Monitor and improve compliance with policies, procedures or protocols for infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship
- Continue to expand staff understanding and skills in infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship.

## Further information

A full copy of the Preventing and Controlling Healthcare-Associated Infection Standard, including the criteria and actions required for health service organisations to meet it, is contained in the NSQHS Standards (second edition). The NSQHS Standards (second edition) is available on the website of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care at [www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au).

The **Advice Centre** provides support on implementing the NSQHS Standards for health service organisations, surveyors and accrediting agencies.

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### **National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards**

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards were developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care with the Australian Government, state and territory partners, consumers and the private sector. The primary aim of the NSQHS Standards is to protect the public from harm and improve the quality of health care. They describe the level of care that should be provided by health service organisations and the systems that are needed to deliver such care.

**The second edition of the NSQHS Standards were released in November 2017. Organisations will be assessed against the new standards from January 2019.**