

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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CDC Releases Infection Prevention Guide to Promote Safe Outpatient Care

The transition of healthcare delivery from acute-care hospitals to outpatient settings, along with ongoing outbreaks and patient notification events, has reiterated the need for greater understanding and implementation of infection prevention guidance in outpatient environments. In response, on July 13, 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a guidance document and checklist specifically highlighting basic infection prevention practices in outpatient settings. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment would like to make our partners aware of this new guide.

The concise guide is titled *Guide to Infection Prevention for Outpatient Settings: Minimum Expectations for Safe Care*. This new guide outlines key infection prevention policies, procedures, and practices that outpatient settings should have in place in order to prevent healthcare-associated infections. It also includes a checklist that facilities and personnel can use to proactively assess their infection control practices.

To view the new outpatient infection prevention guide and checklist, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/settings/outpatient/outpatient-settings.html>.

Key points from the guide and checklist include:

- **Safe medical injection practices** must always be followed. Healthcare personnel should use aseptic technique when preparing and administering medications. Syringes and needles should not be reused either from patient to patient or to reenter medication vials

- Procedures for the **safe handling of potentially contaminated medical equipment** - reusable medical equipment should be cleaned and reprocessed appropriately prior to use on another patient
- Good **hand hygiene**, including use of alcohol-based hand rubs and hand washing with soap and water, is critical to reduce the risk of spreading infections in outpatient settings

Additionally, the guide notes that to prevent infections **facilities** should, at minimum:

- Develop and maintain **infection prevention and occupational health programs**
- Assure at least **one individual with training in infection prevention** is employed by or regularly available to the facility
- Develop **written infection prevention policies and procedures** appropriate for the services provided by the facility and based upon evidence-based guidelines, regulations, or standards
- Provide **job- or task-specific infection prevention education and training** to all healthcare personnel
- Assure sufficient and appropriate **supplies necessary for adherence to Standard Precautions** (e.g. hand hygiene products, personal protective equipment, injection equipment) are available to healthcare personnel
- Perform **regular audits and competency evaluations** of staff's adherence to infection prevention practices
- Utilize the new CDC **checklist** to assess infection control practices
- **Adhere to local, state, and federal requirements** regarding healthcare-associated infection (HAI) surveillance, reportable diseases, and outbreak reporting

Other materials developed to support clinicians include:

- New injection safety CME for in- and outpatient clinicians entitled *Unsafe Injection Practices: Outbreaks, Incidents, and Root Causes*: <http://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/745695>
- A table outlining examples of recent outbreaks to assist in understanding potential breaches: <http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/settings/outpatient/outbreaks-patient-notifications.html>
- New expert commentary by Dr. Melissa Schaefer on Medscape: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/744295>
- New *Safe Healthcare Blog* by Dr. Melissa Schaefer: <http://blogs.cdc.gov/safehealthcare/?p=1742>