

# Preventing Infections

Preventing health care-acquired infections is a priority for Fletcher Allen. Our goal is to eliminate infections that are preventable and minimize those that are not preventable. All of our clinical staff are trained to prevent health care-acquired infections.

## We take infection prevention seriously

The Jeffords Institute's Infection Prevention Department has a total of seven professionals on our Infection Prevention team, with a combined total of 100 years of experience. We believe that makes us unique among hospitals in northern New England.

Members of our Infection Prevention team also serve as consultants in Vermont and New York to lend their expertise in this area. For example, our physician leader for Infection Prevention, Kemper Alston, MD, chairs the Infection Prevention Committee at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

## Working to prevent infections across the organization

- Aggressive cleaning efforts: Our Environmental Services team has received national recognition for their success and innovation in cleaning and testing the cleanliness of our patient rooms after disinfecting.
- Over the past few years over 90 nurses and other clinical staff members have received intensive education in infection prevention. They go on to lead infection prevention efforts in their departments/units.
- We proactively test everyone admitted to our Intensive Care Units for Methicillin-resistant *Streptococcus aureus* (MRSA). We “de-colonize” selected surgical patients, taking the bug out of their system.

## Preventing infections: how we compare

How do we compare with other academic medical centers across the country? Our rates of MRSA, *C. difficile*, central line blood infections, heart surgery infections, total hip infections, total knee infections and hysterectomy infections, to name a few, are all **at or below national averages** for an academic medical center.

We participate in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) benchmarking program so we can compare ourselves to other organizations that report these data.

At a national level, Vermont was rated as having the **lowest infection rates** for central lines of any of the other 17 states that publicly report these data. Central lines are a type of catheter used to give patients medications or blood products into a major blood vessel.

## Partner with us to prevent infections

Wash your hands and ask us to wash ours! Hand-washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection. We emphasize good hand hygiene, and we encourage you to ask us to wash our hands when we enter a patient room. Wash your hands and ask us if we've washed our hands.

For more information about our infection prevention efforts or our infection rates, visit our website and look in “Quality Reports”: [www.FletcherAllen.org/Quality](http://www.FletcherAllen.org/Quality). Or, call (802) 847-6468.