

## Infection Prevention & Control in Senior Care Organizations

Between 1 and 3 million serious infections occur every year in senior care organizations,<sup>1</sup> and infections are a major cause of hospitalization and death among older adults. Thus, a critical aspect of providing safe, high-quality care to senior care residents is having infection prevention and control (IPC) initiatives in place at senior care organizations.

Implementing and monitoring these initiatives — as well as training and educating staff about IPC — are integral to managing the risks that infections and infectious diseases present to residents' health and well-being. Further, strong IPC efforts can help reduce organizational risk and potentially decrease costs.

This checklist covers various IPC considerations to help senior care leaders and staff members evaluate their current practices and identify areas for improvement.<sup>2</sup>

|   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Culture of Safety</i>  |                          |                          |
| Does your organization support a culture of safety in which staff members are empowered to remind others about IPC and raise concerns without fear of punitive action?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization designated a qualified infection preventionist to direct and oversee strategic efforts aimed at curbing infections and improving quality of resident care? <sup>3</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization designated appropriately trained individuals to implement IPC activities and monitoring?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization's commitment to resident safety require that staff members accept personal responsibility for IPC every day?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><i>Culture of Safety (continued)</i></b>  |                          |                          |
| When infection control lapses occur, are the incidents investigated and are corrective actions taken?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have a process for collecting, reviewing, and acting on data and quality measures related to IPC?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b><i>Infection Prevention and Control Program</i></b>   |                          |                          |
| Does your organization have a written IPC program that includes evidence-based policies, procedures, and protocols for infection prevention, infection control, monitoring, and communication?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have all staff members in your organization read the IPC program and acknowledged it in writing?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization’s IPC program include written emergency preparedness protocols for events such as <b>infectious disease outbreaks</b> and natural disasters?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the IPC program include written competencies for infection prevention practices, including staff safety procedures and cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are staff members’ duties, responsibilities, and competencies relative to IPC included in their job descriptions?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the IPC program require compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocols for collecting, handling, and testing clinical specimens?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do organizational leaders, the infection preventionist, and the administrative team stay current on IPC guidelines and best practices to ensure your organization’s program is up to date and effective?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization assess its IPC program at least annually to evaluate and prioritize potential risks for infections, contamination, and exposures as well as the organization’s preparedness to manage such risks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization enact surveillance measures to ensure compliance with the IPC program, and is compliance documented?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Training and Education</b>  |                          |                          |
| Has the infection preventionist received specialized training and education on infectious diseases processes and IPC strategies and techniques?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are all new staff members (including full-time employees, contractors, temporary staff, and volunteers) educated about IPC strategies and techniques prior to being allowed to perform their duties? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is education and training on all aspects of IPC conducted at least annually or according to state and federal requirements?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization provide additional training to address potential new infectious transmission threats and when new equipment or procedures are implemented?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization provide frequent IPC updates and reminders?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are employees given feedback about their compliance with IPC protocols, and is additional training provided in response to recognized lapses in protocols?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Antibiotic Stewardship</b>  |                          |                          |
| For more information, see MedPro's <a href="#">Risk Tips: Antibiotic Stewardship in Senior Care Organizations</a> .  |                          |                          |
| <b>Occupational Health</b>   |                          |                          |
| Does your organization require adherence to Occupational Safety & Health Administration <a href="#">bloodborne pathogen standard</a> ?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is a protocol in place to implement postexposure evaluation and follow-up?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization ensure that healthcare personnel receive immunizations as recommended by the CDC and required by federal, state, or local authorities?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization maintain written records of personnel vaccination?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization offer hepatitis B vaccinations to personnel at risk of occupational exposure?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Occupational Health (continued)</b>   |                          |                          |
| Is a tuberculosis (TB) screening required upon hire and annually thereafter (or as required by state law or a risk assessment) for healthcare personnel at risk of TB exposure?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization implemented sick leave policies that encourage healthcare personnel to stay home when they develop signs or symptoms of infectious illnesses?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Hygiene</b>  |                          |                          |
| Does your organization have written hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene policies based on best practices?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are healthcare workers educated about hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene protocols, the benefits of compliance, and the possible risks of noncompliance?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are adequate and readily accessible supplies always available (including soap, water, paper towels, tissues, and alcohol-based hand rub)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have procedures to contain respiratory secretions in residents who have respiratory infection symptoms?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are residents and their visitors encouraged to wash their hands, be mindful of infection control efforts, and ask questions — or remind staff members — if they think an appropriate action has not been taken?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization offer visual cues and reminders to staff, residents, and visitors about practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (e.g., strategically placed hand sanitizer and tissues; social media posts; and signs, posters, and flyers about cough etiquette and handwashing)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have laminated signs posted at entrances and within the facility reminding personnel, residents, and visitors of appropriate safety precautions if they have respiratory infection symptoms?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Reusable Medical Instruments and Devices</b>  |                          |                          |
| For more information, see MedPro’s <a href="#">Infection Prevention and Control Strategies for Managing Reusable Medical Instruments and Devices in Senior Care Facilities</a> .   |                          |                          |

|   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><i>Injection Safety</i></b>  |                          |                          |
| Does your organization have policies and procedures to prevent drug diversion and to track provider and staff access to controlled substances?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization implemented protocols for the use of aseptic technique — i.e., handling, preparing, and storing medications and injection equipment/supplies to prevent microbial contamination?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization's IPC policies require that medication preparation occurs only in clean, dedicated medication prep areas?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization implemented policies and procedures for cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization's IPC program include guidance on safe injection practices (using a needle/syringe for one patient only; disinfecting the rubber septum on a medication vial prior to piercing; using single-dose medication vials whenever possible, etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your organization implemented or considered technologies related to injection safety (e.g., auto-disable syringes or reuse prevention syringes)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do personnel who prepare and/or administer medications or perform point-of-care testing receive training on safe injection practices during orientation, annually, and when new equipment, technology, or procedures are introduced?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to injection safety procedures and provide feedback to personnel?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do injection protocols adhere to CDC's infection control guidelines for <a href="#">assisted blood glucose monitoring and insulin administration</a> ?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are adequate injection safety supplies available at the facility (e.g., single-use vials and sharps containers)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are used sharps disposed of at the point of care in sharps containers that are closable, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are sharps containers removed and replaced immediately when full?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><i>Personal Protective Equipment</i></b>   |                          |                          |
| Does your organization have sufficient and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE; e.g., gloves and face masks) available and accessible to personnel in resident care areas?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are personnel educated about the specific types of transmission-based precautions (e.g., standard precautions, contact precautions, and enhanced barrier precautions) and when/which types of PPE are required? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| For contact precautions and enhanced barrier precautions, is clear signage posted on doors or walls outside of resident rooms indicating the type of precaution and the required PPE?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are personnel taught proper PPE donning and doffing techniques?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is PPE removed and discarded before leaving resident rooms or care areas?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the facility routinely audit (monitor and document) adherence to PPE use and provide feedback to personnel?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b><i>Environmental Cleaning</i></b>  |                          |                          |
| Does your organization have written cleaning/disinfection policies that include routine and terminal cleaning and disinfection of resident rooms as well as high-touch surfaces in common areas?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have cleaning/disinfection policies that include handling of equipment shared among residents?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have the supplies necessary for appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., Environmental Protection Agency registered disinfectants)?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are cleaners and disinfectants used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions (e.g., dilution, storage, shelf-life, and contact time)?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are spills of blood or other potentially infectious materials promptly cleaned and decontaminated?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do the appropriate personnel receive job-specific training and competency validation on cleaning/disinfection procedures at the time of employment?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><i>Environmental Cleaning (continued)</i></b>  |                          |                          |
| Does your organization routinely audit (monitor and document) the quality of cleaning/disinfection practices and provide feedback to personnel? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization's heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system have regular maintenance and cleaning?                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do designated personnel conduct regular inspections and maintain the internal and external structure of your facility?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization adhere to food safety practices, including storage and sanitation processes in the dining areas?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization maintain the proper hot water and cold water temperatures allowable by state regulations or codes?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your organization's water sources periodically tested for Legionella?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Resources

For more complete guidelines and recommendations on IPC in senior care settings, see the CDC's [Infection Control Assessment and Response \(ICAR\) Tool for General Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings](#) and MedPro's [Risk Resources: Infection Prevention & Control in Senior Care Organizations](#).

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 30). Nursing homes and assisted living (long-term care facilities [LTCFs]). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/>

<sup>2</sup> This checklist is primarily based on the following resources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, January 12 [last reviewed]). *Infection control assessment and response (ICAR) tool for general infection prevention and control (IPC) across settings*. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/infection-control-assessment-tools.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/infection-control-assessment-tools.html); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, November 29 [last reviewed]). *CDC's core infection prevention and control practices for safe healthcare delivery in all settings*. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/core-practices/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/core-practices/index.html); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *The core elements of antibiotic stewardship for nursing homes*. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/core-elements/pdfs/core-elements-antibiotic-stewardship-H.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/core-elements/pdfs/core-elements-antibiotic-stewardship-H.pdf); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, July 12 [updated]). *Implementation of personal protective equipment (PPE) use in nursing homes to prevent spread of multidrugresistant organisms (MDROs)*. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/hai/containment/PPE-Nursing-Homes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/containment/PPE-Nursing-Homes.html); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Infection prevention and control assessment tool for long-term care facilities (Version 1.3.1)*.

<sup>3</sup> Designating an infection preventionist is required under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Rules of Participation for Long-Term Care Providers ([42 CFR, § 483.80 Infection Control](#)). The requirement was effective November 28, 2019.

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This document does not constitute legal or medical advice and should not be construed as rules or establishing a standard of care. Because the facts applicable to your situation may vary, or the laws applicable in your jurisdiction may differ, please contact your attorney or other professional advisors if you have any questions related to your legal or medical obligations or rights, state or federal laws, contract interpretation, or other legal questions.

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