What is infection prevention?
The term "infection prevention" represents practices which are
employed and recommended by health care providers and your
family to prevent the spread of germs.

About germs
We are surrounded by many germs all the time—in our
environment at home, at school, in the workplace, and in the
hospital. Most of the time, we are not harmed by these germs.
However, they can cause illness or infection in people who are sick
or more susceptible.

How are germs spread?
Germs are often found on people’s skin, and then in the
environment on things such as equipment, bedrails, and bathroom
surfaces. They can only be spread if:
• There is a way for the germ to be shared from person to person
or from the environment to a person, and
• The germ contacts an area of a person’s body (e.g. a wound)
where the germ can enter, survive and multiply.

How do my healthcare providers prevent and
control the spread of infections?
Many precautions are taken to help prevent the spread of infection.
"Standard Precautions" are used for everyone. This includes hand
hygiene and the use of gloves, protective eyewear, and a gown
when contact with blood or other body substances is possible.
Additional precautions may be taken for specific conditions. When
extra precautions are required, your visitors and family will be
asked to follow them as well. This may include wearing masks,
gowns and/or gloves to enter the room.

Our policies and practices are consistent with the CDC (Centers
for Disease Control) and New York State Department of Health
guidelines. We have an Infection Prevention Department staffed
by professionals with advanced knowledge and experience in
this area.

Why can infections still occur in
health care settings?
Despite precautions, sometimes infections occur in healthcare
settings because:
• There are large numbers of sick and often fragile people in
a hospital.
• Hospital patients often have wounds or may need tubes inserted
for various treatments. This may reduce the effectiveness of the
body’s normal barriers against infection.

What can you and your visitors do to
help prevent infections?
Everyone has a role to play in preventing infections. The most
important thing you can do is to clean your hands thoroughly
and frequently.

Clean your hands:
• After going to the bathroom
• Before eating
• Before and after touching any wound or incision, any dressing
you may have, or an IV (intravenous site) if you have one.
• After using tissues when coughing, sneezing or blowing
your nose
• After touching body fluids or waste
Take an active part in your care—if you don’t know if someone
caring for you has cleaned their hands, we want you to feel
comfortable asking them to do so.

Be aware of early signs of infection (redness, swelling,
fever) and report them to your health care provider.

What kinds of infections may occur in hospitals
and other health care settings?
• Pneumonia
• Blood stream infections
• Urinary tract infections
• Wound infections

Specific infections that you may have
heard of include:
• Clostridium difficile (Cdiff)
• Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA),
• Vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE)
If you have an infection caused by one of these germs, you will be
given specific information about it.

Thank you for helping us prevent infections by:
• Understanding and using good infection prevention practices as
described in this brochure.
• Taking an active role in your care and safety.
  Ask questions if you have any concerns.

If you have questions or concerns please
contact: Infection Prevention - 585-275-7716

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