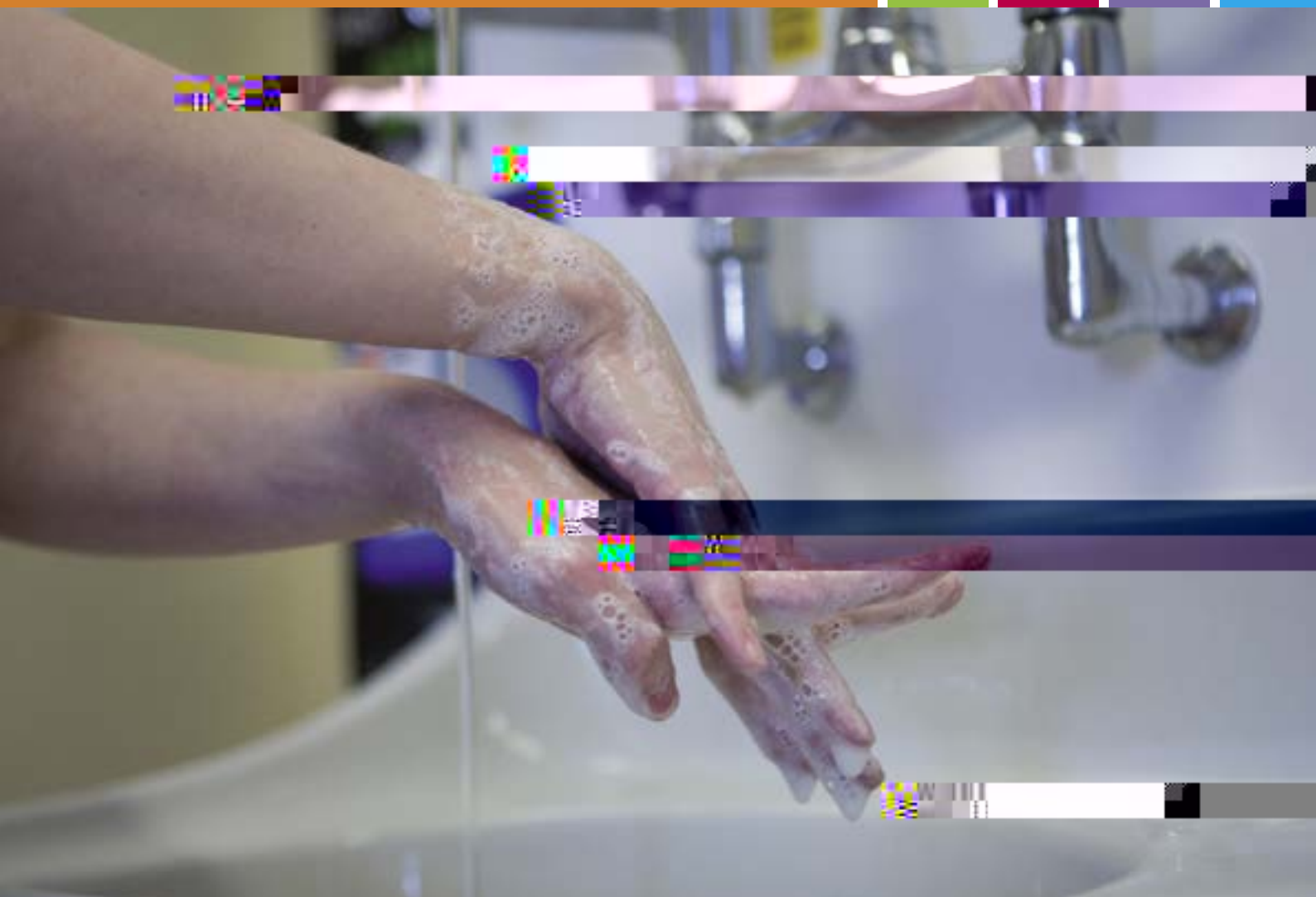


# Infection Prevention and Control

Information and learning resources for health care staff

ADVICE AND INFORMATION





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# Introduction

Infection prevention and control (IPC) practice is an essential component of health and social care, and policy and guidance is constantly evolving. Research helps to inform the evidence base for this important area of nursing practice. Currently there is a lack of quality research evidence to inform IPC practice, this highlights the importance of non-research based evidence supporting nursing practice.

IPC is inextricably linked to antimicrobial resistance and therefore has a central role in health and social care and public health services. Its importance is underlined within the *Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer* (Davies, 2013) and the *UK five year Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Strategy*. Examples of resources on AMR can be found in

Historically, diverse expert opinion and ritual have shaped the nursing practice. But with developments in evidence and improved reporting of some infections we now recognise information and guidance based on available best evidence and expert consensus to be the 'gold standard' as this incorporates systematic searching, an appraisal of methodological quality, and an assessment of clinical relevance. Surveillance systems in place at local, regional and national levels also provide important information which can be used to target local infection prevention practice needs.

Identifying evidence and incorporating it into everyday clinical practice is an essential skill in preventing health care associated infection (HCAI). However, it can be difficult for health care staff to keep up-to-date and adopt best practice due to the constant flow of information and mass of online information thrown up by internet search engines. The result can be

information overload that swamps staff, and much of this information may not be correct or relevant to a different country, have a strong evidence base or objective opinion. Using recognised professional sites instead of search engines can help reduce the risk of inaccurate information.

This resource gives you guidance on how to search and find the relevant evidence-based information and guidance you may require to help keep your infection prevention knowledge and practice up-to-date. It will also point you in the direction of further resources which we hope will save you precious time and help expand your understanding of this specialist area.

This updated resource may be of benefit to:

- nursing students
- nurses undertaking post-registration/graduate studies
- infection prevention and control nurses and health protection teams – resource/reference to signpost people to
- infection prevention link practitioners (including link nurses or champions)
- individuals who deliver nursing care working within health care environments.

Electronic links have been embedded within this resource to help readers easily access available information on infection prevention and control. Whilst these are current at the time of publication, links may be moved by the host web provider. The RCN is therefore unable to accept responsibility for any changes made by other organisations.

There are a variety of options when it comes to finding reliable resources, including:

- local information – trust/employer’s intranet, policies and library
- study days, conferences, courses, in-practice and virtual e-learning resources
- health care industry/commercial companies
- professional organisations such as the Royal College of Nursing
- guidelines from national bodies and government organisations.

The RCN resources/library

aims to help you to develop your skills in the use of the internet and may be a good starting point for locating information as you can access over 1,000 e-journals, 2,000 e-books and a wide range of nursing and health care databases from your home or mobile device to support your practice

Virtual Training Suite is a set of free internet tutorials to help you develop internet research skills for your university course.

## Local resources

These are an ideal place to start searching for information as these will have been written specifically to meet local needs, and will be based on national evidence or best practice.



All organisations that provide health and adult social care are required to have in place policies to support their prevention and management of infection based on national guidance - (Health and Social Care Act 2008, Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance (Department of Health Updated July 2015). The code can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/474226/Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_on\\_the\\_prevention\\_and\\_control\\_of\\_infections\\_and\\_related\\_guidance.pdf](#). You will find your organisation's policies on your intranet, and/or as printed paper policies in folders in the workplace (be careful to check these are the latest versions). These provide evidence-based policy and guidance on infection prevention and control practice in your health care setting, and will contain references for further information and reading.

Most large health care organisations will have medical and nursing textbooks in a local health care library where you can also learn how to gain computer access to a range of journals using specific organisational passwords. Talk to your local health care librarian who can also act as a useful resource by sending you up-to-date alerts on any new information received.



Infection prevention or health protection specialists are a valuable resource. In the first instance local policies and guidance before approaching specialist teams, who should be used as a secondary reference point for complex enquiries only.

Within England Public Health England (PHE) teams are also in operation. There are nine PHE centres and contact details can be found on the PHE website at:


These teams often cover large geographical areas or multiple health care sites. You may be able to search for their contact details via local policies/guidelines or your employer's intranet. Alternatively, your local internal switchboard may provide contact details.

PHE's health protection teams work alongside the NHS, local authorities and emergency services providing specialist support in communicable disease, health protection and emergency planning. To discover how to reach your regional PHE team, please go to:

In Wales health protection teams details are at:

In Ireland details can be found at:

In Scotland details can be found at:

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- If you work in a large health care organisation many of your local IPC teams will hold study days or lectures/updates on a regular basis and these will be reasonably priced or even free, so make the most of this opportunity and ask around to find out dates and venues.
  - The RCN holds a number of events each



The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice, and shapes health policies.

The RCN considers infection prevention and control to be a key element of governance and is committed to supporting nurses to enhance nursing practice and awareness in this area.

Information and professional resources can be found at Infection Prevention and Control webpage on the RCN website at:

and also at the Public Health section

and patient safety systems and human factors section

A list of infection prevention and control publications including topics such as infection prevention and control commissioning toolkit, glove use and the prevention of occupational dermatitis and selection and use of wipes guidance can be found at



As the world's largest dedicated nursing collection, with four libraries (Wales, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland) and online access to quality information resources around the clock, the RCN Library and Archive Services are on hand to assist you in finding information to support best practice in the workplace and aid your studies.

Our team of expert information professionals are available to support you in a number of ways including:

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infection prevention and control. Access to the network is free and is supported by the RCN infection prevention and control web area. Visit:

Additionally, a network for those working with Children and Young people (CYP) has been established with a focus on IPC. This network uses a Facebook page to communicate.

If you wish to join the IPC Network please email

If you wish to join the CYP infection prevention and control network please visit:

The RCN hosts a number of professional nursing practice forums. Organised by members, for members, they provide a means to share best practice, information, and ideas for those working in a similar nursing speciality or with similar interests. RCN members can join up to three forums for free, please visit [www.rcn.org.uk/forums](#) for more details.

The Infection Prevention Society (IPS) exists to promote the advancement of education in infection prevention and control for the benefit of the community as a whole. It provides training courses, accreditation schemes, education materials and audit tools, and organises meetings and conferences. Please visit [www.infection-prevention.com](#)

The HIS exists to foster the advancement of knowledge and education of all those who have an interest in the important field of hospital acquired infection. Its website provides links to other relevant sites and makes available reports and guidelines from the working parties funded and supported by the society. Information and application forms for scientific grants and membership are also available online at [www.hisociety.org.uk](#)

UK BioIndustry Association (BIA) is the trade association for innovative enterprises involved in UK bioscience. Members include emerging and more established bioscience companies; pharmaceutical companies; academic, research and philanthropic organisations; and service providers to the bioscience sector. The BIA represents the interests of its members to a broad section of stakeholders, from government and regulators to patient groups, microbiology and the media. Please visit: [www.bia.org.uk](#)

At the forefront of the antimicrobial chemotherapy field the society sets standards for antimicrobial susceptibility testing and use, both within the UK and overseas, supporting microbiologists in their practice and the promotion and provision of channels through which its members can ensure their continuing professional development.

The club is a multi-disciplinary forum for the exchange of information in relation to decontamination and is of interest to any nurse in a role related to decontamination (particularly cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation) of medical equipment – for example, nurses working in endoscopy, theatres or infection prevention. The club hosts an annual conference and study days that are well attended and evaluated.

There are a wide variety of search engines you can visit which will provide links to a variety of sites – be careful which information you trust as it may not be evidence based, objective or relevant to the subject you are searching for.

The websites listed below will help provide the evidence base and policy guidance on infection prevention and control practice.



Antimicrobial resistance has become a key challenge in health care due to spread of resistance genes between bacterial species, increasing pressures as a result of antibiotic overuse, lack of resources/knowledge/infrastructure to aid health care practice and infection prevention and control in low and middle income countries and global trade and travel. The unpredictability of outbreaks, many of a zoonotic nature has also added to these global challenges and we all need to be aware of this international perspective to infection prevention



Following changes to the NHS in 2013 both Public Health England and the Department of Health websites now sit within the 'gov.uk' umbrella website. See below for specific information relating to infection prevention and control.

(England)

The Department of Health (DH) leads, shapes and funds health care in England. Amongst the information it provides, the following link may be of interest:

(PHE)

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services.

PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health that carries out surveillance and epidemiology services across England. The fingertips website hosted by PHE collates information on antimicrobial resistance, infection prevention and healthcare associated infection (HCAI) which it displays in a

published by NICE. See Infection prevention and control

#### NHS

Evidence is a service that enables access to authoritative clinical and non-clinical evidence and best practice through a web-based portal. It helps people from across the UK, public health and social care sectors to make better decisions.

#### (HPS)

HPS was established by the Scottish Government in 2005 to strengthen and co-ordinate health protection in Scotland.

The HPS produces model infection control policies – example action plans written to a high standard – to guide those wishing to develop, refine or compare their own policies, with a view to encouraging standardisation of policy across Scotland.

These policies are not mandatory but are intended to provide a common, evidence-based approach to infection control.

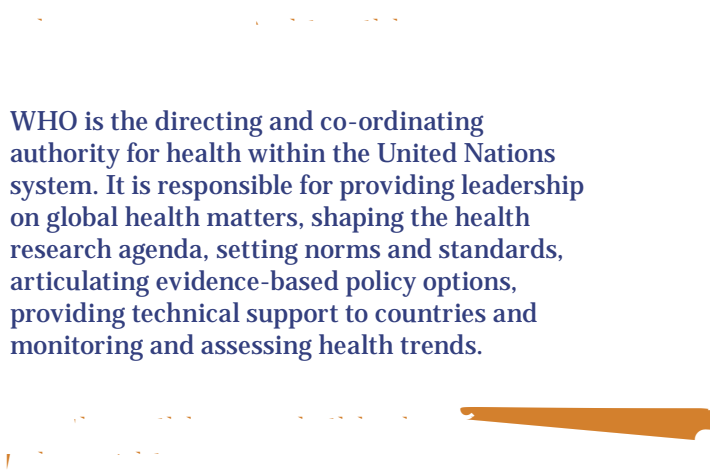


The International Resource for Infection Control (iNRIC) brings together the best available online evidence-based, quality-tagged resources on infection prevention and control. It provides a one-stop shop for infection prevention and control guidance and is easily navigated as information can be viewed under country, types of practice such as hand hygiene (cleaning, decontamination), settings (community, care homes, hospital, prison) and organisms (MRSA, *C. difficile*).

Global collaboration and communication has increased in the important fight against infection prevention and control and infectious diseases. Collaboration with colleagues in this specialist field has developed and a wider range of international guidelines and documents have been added to the digital library.

The website aimed at infection prevention and control professionals, trainees and all health care staff who require up-to-date evidence-based information in infection prevention and control and the infectious disease domain remains freely available to all.





WHO is the directing and co-ordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

A new approach to strengthening national and international IPC capacity, improving practices and changing behaviour for safer, high quality patient care. Guidelines published in 2016



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## Useful references:

- Guidance, resources and information for professionals about Ebola virus disease, a severe viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF):
- Zoonotic diseases (zoonoses): guidance, data and analysis:
- The National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID):
- Innovative Technologies 2015:
- Emerging and Infectious Diseases:
- Generating Evidence for Infectious Diseases with Epidemic Potential – Meeting Report 2015:
- Ebola Virus Disease:
- Coronaviruses:
- Ebola/Marburg Haemorrhagic Virus:
- Zika virus:
- Responsible use of medicines in animals
- Responsible use of medicines in animals



**Royal College of Nursing (RCN):**

**Infection Prevention Society (IPS):**

**Healthcare Infection Society:**

# References

Davies S C (2013) *Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, Volume Two, 2011, Infections and the rise of antimicrobial resistance*, London: Department of Health. Available at:

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excellence in practice and shapes health policies

RCN Online

[www.rcn.org](http://www.rcn.org)

RCN Direct

[www.rcn.org](http://www.rcn.org)  
0345 772 6100

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