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**BREAKING THE CHAIN  
OF INFECTION  
THROUGH PREVENTION**



Regular visitors to our website will know that breaking the chain of infection is something we are utterly committed to.

We exist to support hospitals, care homes and specialist education facilities keep their patients, residents or students' safe from infection.

Every machine we design exists to make that fight a little easier.

Because of this passion we tend to talk about infection control strategies a lot too because it's simply one of the most effective ways of controlling outbreaks in hospitals and care homes.

It saves time, it saves money and it saves lives.

It also reduces the burden on staff who is already working very hard.

But the chain of infection can be broken (or at the very least disrupted) before a patient ever enters the hospital.

### **Immunisation**

Where possible, individuals (especially those at increased risk) should be getting immunised against the various disease out there.

Each year the NHS makes the flu (influenza) vaccine available to millions of people for free. People over the age of 65, individuals with respiratory conditions, pregnant women and children are all eligible.

But a surprising number of people simply don't bother.

For the rest of us there is, of course a charge especially if the vaccine is needed for a holiday. It's easy to grimace at the cost of an injection but the simple truth is: they work.

The Meningitis B vaccine costs around £250 for two jabs to protect your child for life. It's a lot of money but the alternative is simply the stuff of nightmares.

If, for any reason you have reservations about getting a jab – especially if you plan on travelling to a high risk part of the world – we strongly recommend speaking to your GP. There is, unfortunately, a lot of misinformation regarding vaccines so getting professional advice is critical.

### **Education**

As with most things, knowledge is the key to understanding.

Educating people on the importance of proper hygiene is a really important part of infection control.

Of course, the term hygiene is a very broad brush and covers everything from washing ones hands properly to sexual health, but it is all relevant and all important.

The cost of sexually transmitted infections for example costs the NHS £620 million a year so any improvements in overall hygiene by the populous will have a positive and enduring impact on the spread of infection.



But at a grass roots level, washing hands properly, especially in a clinical setting, saves lives as it can prevent migration of viruses that pose particular threat to at risk groups.

## ***Wellbeing***

All studies point towards a correlation between wellbeing and resistance to infection.

Individuals who are well rested, have a balanced diet, exercise regularly and stay hydrated are far more likely to recover quicker from illness or resist it altogether.

The connection between malnutrition and dehydration with hospital admissions is impossible to ignore so ensuring people have the right information regarding diet and lifestyle is important.

Admittedly putting the information in front of someone and them acting on it are two very different things.

But it's hardly surprising how much better we feel after a good night's sleep and a healthy salad for lunch compared to fast food; especially it follows a late night and a poor night's sleep.

## ***Take Care of Yourself***

Infections can enter the body by a number of methods including the respiratory system and broken skin.

Whilst it may not be practical (or pleasant) to wear a face mask all day, making sure wounds are properly cleaned and dressed, as well as observing proper hygiene standards can limit or prevent an infection from taking hold.

Similarly, if you do have some form of injury on your hands, make sure gloves are worn when handling food as microbes can be transferred to and from the food you're handling.

Stomach viruses – be they bacterial, parasitic or viral – can be life threatening so preventative measures on this front should be taken very seriously.

## ***Don't Be a Hero***

If you're unwell, isolate yourself.

We've all been guilty of coming into work when we're unwell. The reasons are as multitudinous as the cause of illnesses themselves but amongst the favourites are: too much work to do, it'll look bad and worries over pay.

The reality is if you're unwell, staying at home and recovering fully is actually a far better approach than returning to work too soon, putting your body under more stress and increasing the chances of the disease returning.

You are also going to infect your co-workers.

No one likes to feel useless or that they're letting the team down but one person out of action for 5 days is far better than, for example, an entire nursing team being off for 2 or more days each. If a team of 4 all gradually succumb to illness due to 1 member of staff returning to work too early, that's 8 days lost instead of 5.

Not to mention the added impact of cross infection to patients on the ward.



Of course, not all conditions can be avoided and some sadly take a long time to recover from but sometimes small changes is all it takes to make a long lasting difference.

DDC Dolphin is a world leader in sluice/dirty utility room solutions and committed to winning the fight against infectious disease. If you need support protecting your staff and patients contact us today.

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