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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **NICE launches new clinical guideline on prevention of healthcare associated infections in primary and community care**

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has issued its latest clinical guideline, on the prevention of healthcare associated infections in primary and community care (GP surgeries, health centres, nursing homes etc). The guideline makes recommendations on the standard principles for preventing healthcare associated infections and on measures for preventing infections associated with the use of:

- long-term urinary catheters;
- enteral (artificial) feeding systems, and
- central venous catheters.

These recommendations provide guidance on infection prevention and control precautions that should be applied by all healthcare personnel and other carers, in the care of patients in community and primary care settings.

The recommendations for standard principles are divided into three broad recommendation headings:

- hand hygiene;
- the use of personal protective equipment, and
- the safe use and disposal of sharps.

The guideline complements recent guidance from the Department of Health which makes recommendations for the prevention of infections in secondary care (hospital trusts).

Thames Valley University (TVU) was commissioned by NICE to develop these guidelines and supported by the National Collaborating Centre (NCC) for Nursing & Supportive Care. The NCC is a group of health professional and patient/carer organisations who manage the development of clinical guidelines for NICE. TVU followed the Institute's standards of guideline development. They established a guideline development group consisting of service users and carers, health professionals and academics who reviewed the worldwide data alongside current clinical practice and the experience of service users; and the feedback they receive from two rounds of widespread consultation.

**Andrea Sutcliffe, Planning and Resources Director and Executive Lead for this guideline, said:** “Around 320,000 healthcare-associated infections occur every year (almost 3 million during the last decade), costing the NHS an estimated £1 billion annually. These infections, on average, add 11 days of hospitalisation for each person infected. Around a third of these infections could probably have been prevented. This highlights the importance of having effective systems in place to prevent the spread of infections within the healthcare setting. This guidance should reassure those who use primary and community care services, as well as their carers and other health workers, that the NHS is committed to taking precautions to minimise the risk from health related infections.”

**Professor Robert Pratt, Director of the Guideline Development Group, said:** “This guideline marks an important development in patient care as, regardless of setting, all healthcare workers will be applying the same infection prevention measures. This seamless service is particularly important given the speed with which patients move between hospital and community, and should encourage patients to apply the same precautions themselves. The guideline has been developed following a collaborative and consultative approach, using the best available evidence to help ensure the NHS does everything it can to ensure service users, as well as those caring for them, are protected from healthcare related infections. We urge those responsible for implementing NICE guidance to ensure

that staff and carers are given the appropriate support and training to be able to follow the guidance fully, as the benefits for patients of doing so are potentially huge.”

**Ends**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About NICE**

1. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk).
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
  - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals.
  - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.
  - whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.
3. NICE also funds three enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).
4. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.

### **About clinical guidelines**

5. Clinical guidelines are recommendations on the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales. They sit alongside, but do not replace, the knowledge and skills of experienced health professionals.
6. NICE clinical guidelines are developed by independent groups that include healthcare professionals working in the NHS, patients and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers. Professional and patient/carer groups whose members are likely to be affected by the guideline are able to submit information and comment on the recommendations before they are finalised.
7. For details of NICE clinical guidelines currently in development, log on to the website at <http://www.nice.org.uk/catcg1.asp?c=20055>.

### **About the NCC Nursing & Supportive Care**

8. The National Collaborating Centre for Nursing & Supportive Care is based at the Royal College of Nursing, and involves the following partners:
  - Royal College of Nursing Institute
  - College of Health
  - UK Cochrane Centre
  - Centre for Statistics in Medicine, Institute of Health Sciences, Oxford
  - Clinical Effectiveness Forum for Allied Health Professionals
  - Centre for Evidence Based Nursing, University of York
  - Health Economics Research Centre, University of Oxford
  - University of Oxford Library Services, Health Care Libraries