

News update

NEWSLETTER CONTENT – FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL USE

October 2026

Past, Present, Prepared for the Future

Each year during the third week of October health service organisations across the world rally to promote effective infection prevention and control practices which protect patients, carers and healthcare workers. This annual event is Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Week.

Past, present, prepared for the future

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) theme for IPC Week 2026 is **Past, Present, Prepared for the future**. This year's theme recognises the progress made in IPC, reinforces the importance of consistent IPC practices today, and highlights the actions needed to ensure patients, consumers and healthcare workers remain protected into the future.

The Commission reinforces the role of IPC within health care through the [National Safety and Quality Health Services Standards Preventing and Controlling Infections Standard](#). The Commission also coordinates the [National Hand Hygiene Initiative \(NHHI\)](#) which is a multimodal program promoting the importance of hand hygiene, a key strategy in preventing and controlling infections. The NHHI incorporates a learning management platform which houses [eLearning modules on IPC](#) for healthcare workers.

Past

Advances in IPC have significantly improved patient and workforce safety over time. The introduction of universal precautions in the 1980s, and the introduction of standard precautions in the 1990s established a consistent approach to preventing the transmissions of infections in healthcare settings. The [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#) further strengthened this work by prioritising the critical and ongoing role IPC has across health services.

Resources on standard and transmission-based precautions include:

- [Standard](#) and [transmission-based precautions](#) posters for acute and primary care
- [Standard and transmission-based precautions posters for aged care](#)
- Additional [resources](#) including environmental cleaning, aseptic technique.

Present

IPC remains fundamental to the delivery of high-quality care. Everyone has a role in preventing infections by consistently applying standard precautions, including hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette, and the appropriate use of personal protective equipment, for every patient, every time. This helps break the chain of infection. The hierarchy of controls support teams and individuals to implement a comprehensive approach to managing infection risks.

Resources that support current, day-to-day IPC practice include:

- [Using the hierarchy of controls in IPC](#)
- [Break the chain of infection infographic](#)
- [Infection prevention and control for specific diseases](#)

Prepared for the future

Looking ahead, it is important to maintain and strengthen IPC practices through risk management, infection surveillance, and quality improvement initiatives, as well as supporting ongoing education. These efforts help ensure our health system remains resilient and responsive to future infection risks, and protects staff, patients and communities.

Resources that support the ongoing progression of IPC practices include:

- [Principles of healthcare surveillance](#)
- [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#)

Let's all consider what action we can take to prevent and control infections in our healthcare services. Use the IPC Week 2026 resources at https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/news-and-media/events-and-awareness-days/infection-prevention-and-control-week_

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