

## **Serious Complications**

This shows how often patients experienced certain potentially preventable serious complications, either after an operation or as a result of other care provided in the hospital.

Hospitals can reduce the chance of serious complications by following safe practices.

## **Deaths for Certain Conditions**

For some medical conditions, death rates have been shown to vary from one hospital to another. This shows how often patients with these conditions died while they were in the hospital.

Higher death rates may be a sign of poorer quality of care.

## **Hospital-Acquired Conditions**

Patients who enter the hospital for treatment of one medical problem sometimes leave with additional injuries, infections, or other serious conditions that occur during the course of their hospital stay. Although some of these complications may not be avoidable, too often patients suffer from injuries or illnesses that could have been prevented if the hospital had taken proper precautions. Hospitals are required to report how often patients acquire any one of ten potentially avoidable conditions while being treated in the hospital.

This information shows the number of cases reported by the hospitals for each of eight specific hospital-acquired conditions (HACs). Since these kinds of events are usually very rare, the numbers shown are very small. While it may be hard to compare one hospital to another, this information can help you determine how well hospitals are preventing or avoiding HACs and questions you may want to ask.

## **Healthcare-Associated Infections**

Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs) are infections that patients get as a result of medical care. These may occur in any healthcare setting, including hospitals, surgical centers, clinics, nursing homes, or rehabilitation facilities. Infections can result from many different kinds of medical treatment, including medical devices (such as catheters and ventilators), surgical procedures, or the prolonged use of antibiotics. They may also easily be transmitted from one person to another when healthcare workers do not wash their hands properly.

Formative Research  
Focus Group Handout #3

Healthcare-associated infections are the most common complication of hospital care and one of the top 10 causes of death in the U.S. Many of these infections can be avoided if proper guidelines are followed.