

# How to Avoid Hospital Germs



Florence Nightingale once said, "The first requirement of a hospital is that it should do no harm." Unfortunately, that goal has still not been totally achieved. There is a good deal of research that shows spending time in a hospital can make you sick—for several reasons.

- There are a number of viruses and bacteria brought into hospitals by patients, employees, and visitors.
- The hospital rounds made by the staff can transmit viruses and bacteria from one patient to another.
- Hospital procedures, such as injections and I.V. therapy, penetrate the skin, bypassing the body's first line of defense against disease.

Nosocomial (hospital-linked) infections are on the rise due to hospital cutbacks, carelessness and violations of infection-control standards. Here's what you can do to protect yourself.

- Try to be as well-rested and as well-nourished as possible before you're admitted to the hospital.
- Ask that hospital personnel wash their hands before providing care to you.
- If a hospital roommate becomes infected with pneumonia, ask to have your room changed.