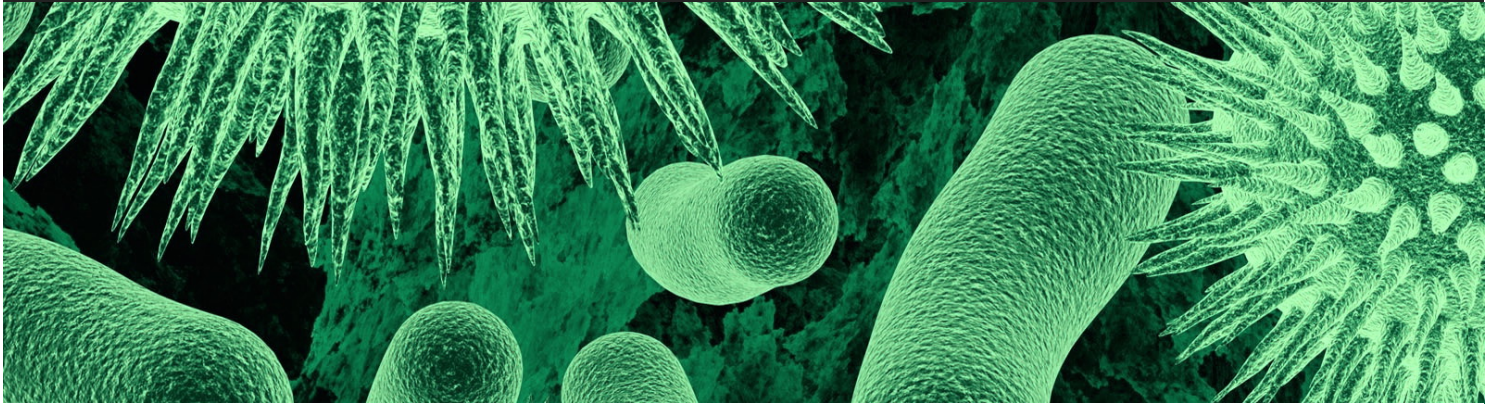


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LONG TERM CARE **INFECTIOUS DISEASE** EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Welcome, we're glad you're here.

Another perk of attending an Infectious Disease - Foundations Course is getting access to this bi-annual newsletter curated for certified long term care facility staff members like you.



FOCUS AREAS :

Healthcare Acquired Infections
and Prevention Methods

Healthcare Acquired Infections

We know long term care facilities (LTC) are slammed between COVID-19 and major staffing shortages. In the midst of the chaos, we're taking

a ^{ues}step back to look at a larger category of infectious diseases affecting LTC residents and staff: healthcare acquired infections or HAIs.

Infections are common in LTC killing almost 388,000 residents each year - and these numbers are before the COVID-19 pandemic. These infections can be broken down into 4 major categories which together represent [3.8 million infections](#) annually in LTC.

The categories include: respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, urinary tract, and skin and soft tissue. See below for individual HAIs in each category affecting LTC.

Respiratory tract infections:

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can cause mild to severe illness and is transmitted from human-to-human via droplets. There are over 30 types of pneumonia caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi. Most patients with pneumonia do not need to be in isolation and should be cared for using standard precautions. Some forms of pneumonia require droplet and/or contact precautions.

Gastrointestinal tract infections:

C. diff or Clostridioides difficile, is a bacterium which causes severe diarrhea and colitis (inflammation of the colon). C. diff can be transmitted directly and indirectly via surfaces. **Alcohol-based hand rubs are NOT effective against C. diff.** Utilize Contact precautions and use disposable or dedicated equipment when possible.

Urinary tract infections:

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are one of the most common infections among LTC residents. Some contributing factors include urinary incontinence, bladder and kidney stones, urinary retention, and urinary catheter use. Ensure residents are hydrating and toileting often to maintain healthy bladders. To reduce **catheter-associated UTIs or CAUTIs**, use appropriate insertion and maintenance methods and reexamine often to ensure urinary catheter use is necessary.

Skin and soft tissue infections:

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a bacteria-caused infection which can spread quickly in healthcare settings including LTC. Symptoms include fever and swollen, painful red bumps that may be warm to the touch and full of pus. **MRSA kills more Americans per year than AIDS** and can cause other severe complications including pneumonia and blood stream infections. Click [here](#) for more information on MRSA.

Candida auris or C. auris is a fungus which can cause serious infections to the bloodstream and other parts of the body. **More than 1 in 3 patients with C. auris die within one month of diagnosis.** Although it was not discovered until 2009, it is becoming more common, especially in LTC and other healthcare settings. C.auris can be difficult to treat as it is resistant to many of the common

-fungal drugs. Click [here](#) for more information on C. auris.

Prevention Methods for HAIs

When looking to prevent HAIs or other infections, it is important to maintain and monitor residents' mouth, skin, and urinary health. See below for highlights in each area and refer to the [Head-to-Toe Toolkit](#) for further information on infection prevention.



Dental plaque contains bacteria that can travel from the mouth into the lungs, causing pneumonia. By examining the mouth, brushing teeth, using mouthwash, and properly cleaning dentures, you can reduce the amount of dental plaque present and protect against pneumonia.



Skin is the largest organ of the body and any breaks or tears in it can allow organisms to enter the body and cause infections. To maintain healthy skin, remember to observe changes in skin, reposition residents often, monitor nutrition and hydration, bathe residents frequently using appropriate techniques, and watch for signs of itching such as frequent scratching.



Maintaining good urinary health is imperative in preventing urinary tract infections. When caring for residents, look for any signs of pain or changes in urination and ensure proper bathing, hydration, and toileting routines are in place. Be mindful many residents may experience incontinence, urinary retention, and/or bladder or kidney stones which require different specialized care and treatment methods.



Proper hand hygiene is critical in preventing the transmission of infections in LTC. Use alcohol-based hand rub and wash hands frequently. Be sure to wash hands when visibly soiled and after toileting. When using alcohol-based hand rub, use enough product to thoroughly wet hands.

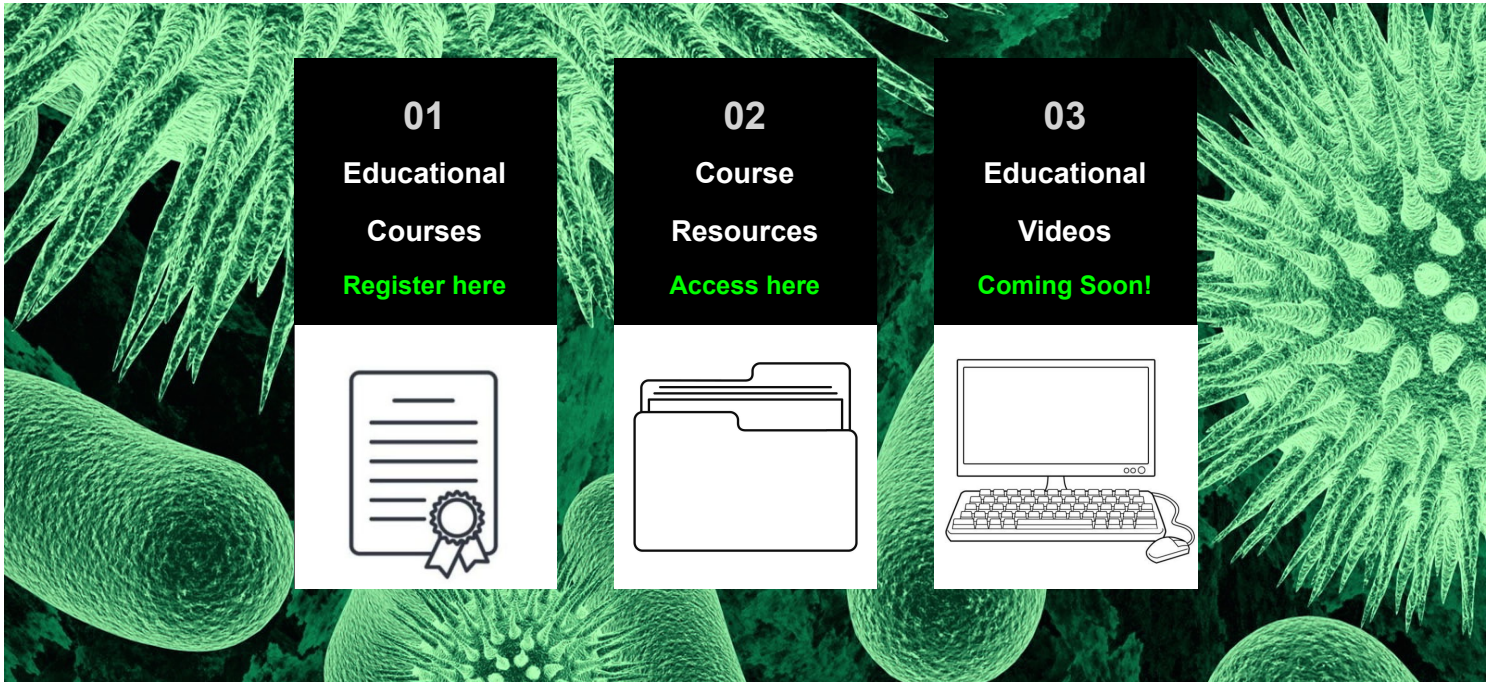
Infectious Disease Resources

[Head to Toe Infection Prevention Handbook](#)

[LTC Infectious Disease Cards - Pocket Guide](#)

[Infection Control Posture Flyer](#)

Looking for more? Check out our other resources below.



Georgia's Long Term Care Infectious Disease Educational Program is funded through Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Civil Money Penalty (CMP) Funds – Grant #: 21035G (CMP REQUEST #: 2020-04-GA-1117)

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