How We Cut C. diff Infections

Q & A with Central Maine Health
THE RESULTS: C. diff Rates

Central Maine Health implemented Sodexo’s Protecta program as part of a system-wide overhaul of environmental services and infection prevention programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disinfecting Solution</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bleach</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Protecta Program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53% Reduction in C. diff infection rates with Protecta

AT A GLANCE

How Central Maine Implemented Protecta

When using Protecta, Central Maine made changes to:
- Equipment
- Cleaning Processes
- Protocols for Specimen Collection
- Approach to Surveillance
- Collaboration
- Reporting
- Antibiotic Stewardship Strategies
- Staff Engagement

Q: What was going on with your healthcare system when C. diff infections were highest?

Joanne: There were a lot of changes made around the time I was hired. I was brought in to oversee the program and I took the department in a different direction. They had problems with C. diff rates, so they did “bleach sweeps.” They would clean every piece of equipment with bleach. After the cleaning, the rates would temporarily decrease, but would eventually rise again because of recontamination.

A: Also, the bleach cleaning, over time, destroys the equipment, which can be costly.

Q: They have the C. diff rates that go down when the bleach cleaning day happens, and go back shortly thereafter. What was their attitude about it? Did they consider it urgent or did they accept it?

Joanne: It was definitely a problem they wanted to solve, which is why they enlisted the help of Sodexo’s Protecta program to focus on the environment.

Q: What was going on with your healthcare system when C. diff infections were highest?

Joanne: There were a lot of changes made around the time I was hired. I was brought in to oversee the program and I took the department in a different direction. They had problems with C. diff rates, so they did “bleach sweeps.” They would clean every piece of equipment with bleach. After the cleaning, the rates would temporarily decrease, but would eventually rise again because of recontamination.

A: Also, the bleach cleaning, over time, destroys the equipment, which can be costly.

“The quality of our Environmental Services department is directly proportional to our HAI rates.”

The challenge: Scrubbing Off C. diff

- Equipment
- Cleaning Processes
- Protocols for Specimen Collection
- Approach to Surveillance
- Collaboration
- Reporting
- Antibiotic Stewardship Strategies
- Staff Engagement

Central Maine Healthcare implemented Sodexo’s Protecta program as part of a system-wide overhaul of environmental services and infection prevention programs.

After one thorough cleaning with bleach, C. diff can come back. Joanne Kenny-Lynch is the System Director at Central Maine Healthcare in Lewiston, Maine. She has been working in infection prevention for twenty-five years in several different institutions—and what has struck her is that she’s seen the exact same challenges in so many different places.

Fortunately, her experience and knowledge of what works came in handy when the team at Central Maine implemented a program to cut C. diff infections.
WHY USE PROTECTA?
Implementing Protecta can:
• Reduce HAIs, associated costs, and penalties
• Decrease readmissions and length of stay
• Increase patient satisfaction and perception of cleanliness
• Improve employee satisfaction and confidence that they are working in a safe, clean environment

Protecta is Sodexo’s infection prevention solution that uses a combination of disinfecting chemicals, tools, processes, employee training, and technology.

The Protecta program is for:
• Leaders who care about patient outcomes and avoiding the financial and human costs of dangerous infections
• Infection prevention and environmental services teams who are on a mission to reach zero patient infections
• Management teams who need better, safer tools to proactively do their jobs, satisfy their clients, and protect patients from infections

Q: So, how did you bring down the C. diff number?
Joanne: It was not one single thing, but a multi-faceted approach that brought the numbers down.

In the first quarter of 2018, Sodexo began using different disinfectant products that did not include bleach, but were effective against all commonly encountered microbes and spores. We switched to single-use mops and wipes to prevent cross-contamination. There was a lot of staff training with Sodexo. All EVS techs were re-educated on the Protecta standardized way to clean. That training and reinforcement was important.

At the same time, we realized that it wasn’t just an environmental issue. We also took a closer look at specimen collection and testing. Patients can be colonized with C. diff, but not be actively infected. Depending on the lab test that you use, it can have a positive result. It was important to reinforce that proper specimens are ones that conform to the container. Patients should be off laxatives and should be exhibiting symptoms, such as fever, high white blood cells, or abdominal pain with diarrhea. We added a consultation with Infection Prevention to our protocol before sending the specimen after Day 3, when it would be considered a Hospital-Onset infection. Additionally, we added another step to our laboratory testing protocols, which would give us more confidence that the patient was truly infected.


Q: So, what’s next?
Joanne: We’re looking for more ways to implement Protecta. For example, there have been several studies that say people on antibiotics may not have C. diff. But the bacteria is in the room, and the next patient coming into the room could be exposed to it. So, we’re starting to disinfect for all discharges.

Q: Any advice you would give to another healthcare organization that is struggling with high infection rates. How can they get support from their C-suite?
Joanne: You can make a business case for it. C. diff doesn’t just have costs in patient safety, but financially. Think about how the entire hospital is getting hit financially having high infection rates. Also, don’t go to the C-suite by yourself. Get other impacted areas involved—providers, nurses, the pharmacy, lab, even IT.

Q: In your career, what are some other not-so-effective steps have hospitals taken to deal with healthcare associated infections?
Joanne: Many hospitals financially don’t invest in EVS (environmental service) staff. They don’t provide the salaries, education, and credit for all that they impact. That’s a mistake a lot of places do make, and that is short-sighted. We don’t want our good EVS staff to leave, and the quality of our EVS department is directly proportional to our HAI rates.

THE FUTURE: Tips and Advice for the Rest of Us

Q: So, how did you bring down the C. diff number?
Joanne: It was not one single thing, but a multi-faceted approach that brought the numbers down.

By the first quarter of 2018, Sodexo began using different disinfectant products that did not include bleach, but were effective against all commonly encountered microbes and spores. We switched to single-use mops and wipes to prevent cross-contamination. There was a lot of staff training with Sodexo. All EVS techs were re-educated on the Protecta standardized way to clean. That training and reinforcement was important.

At the same time, we realized that it wasn’t just an environmental issue. We also took a closer look at specimen collection and testing. Patients can be colonized with C. diff, but not be actively infected. Depending on the lab test that you use, it can have a positive result. It was important to reinforce that proper specimens are ones that conform to the container. Patients should be off laxatives and should be exhibiting symptoms, such as fever, high white blood cells, or abdominal pain with diarrhea. We added a consultation with Infection Prevention to our protocol before sending the specimen after Day 3, when it would be considered a Hospital-Onset infection. Additionally, we added another step to our laboratory testing protocols, which would give us more confidence that the patient was truly infected.

WHAT IS PROTECTA?

Protecta is a comprehensive infection prevention program that when fully implemented can reduce infections, decrease patient readmissions and lengths of stay, and improve employee satisfaction and confidence.

To start a conversation on how you can bring Protecta to your facility please reach out to:
healthcare@sodexo.com  us.sodexo.com/healthcare