

# HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - VOL 4

## COMMON SOURCES OF INFECTION IN A HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENT



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## INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, while hospitals and healthcare centres are places where people recover from illnesses, they can also be where infections are transmitted. HAIs, or Hospital Associated Infections, account for up to 165,000 infections in Australia each year.

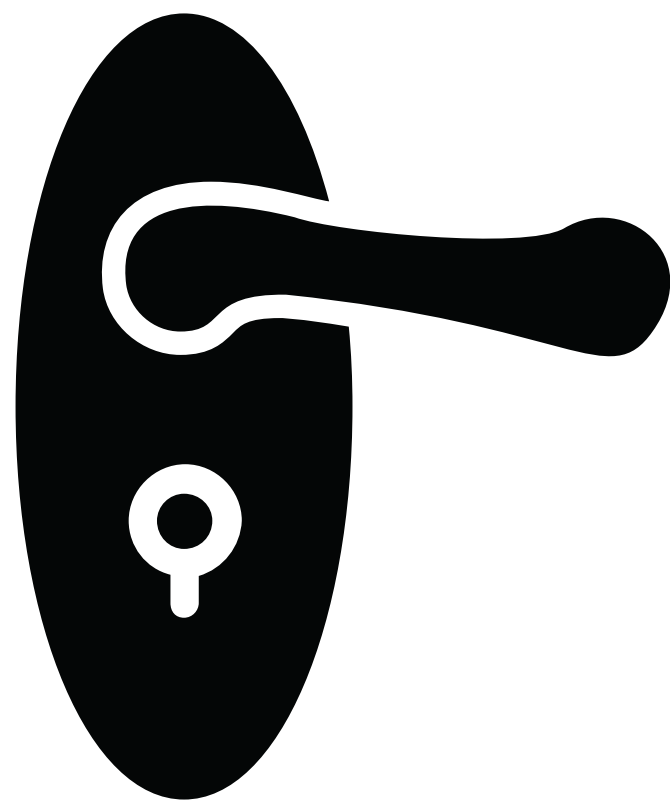
These infections can increase costs for healthcare providers as they lead to more hospital admissions, some of which may require weeks of detailed treatment.

Before healthcare providers can prevent HAIs, they first need to understand what causes them. The following ebook seeks to achieve this.



## HOW CAN HAIS SPREAD? PART 1

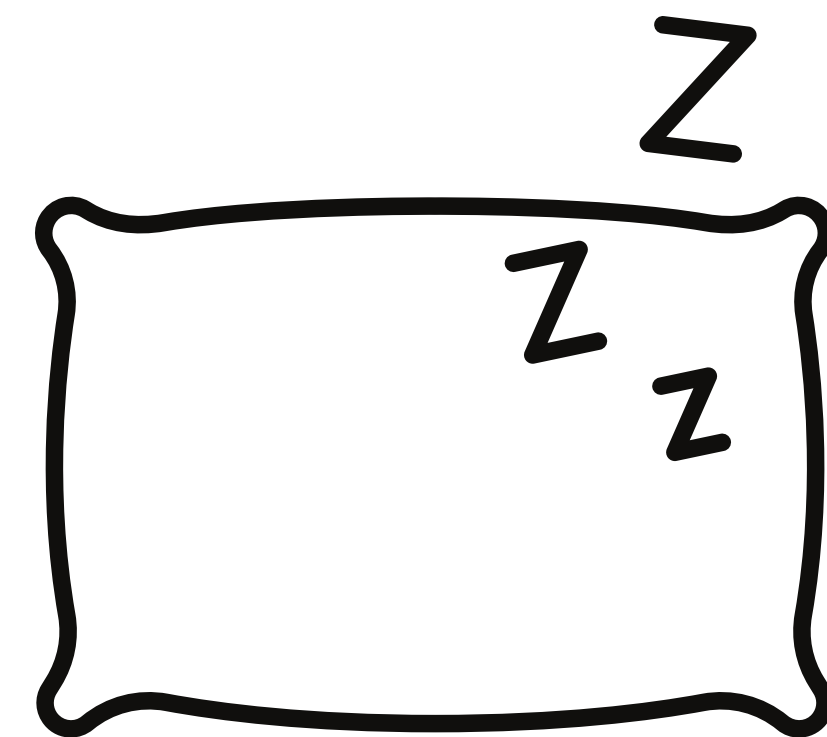
HAIs spread like all other infections, through bacteria. As they are invisible, this makes them difficult to control, especially in large settings. They spread most commonly through:



**Door Handles**



**Floors**



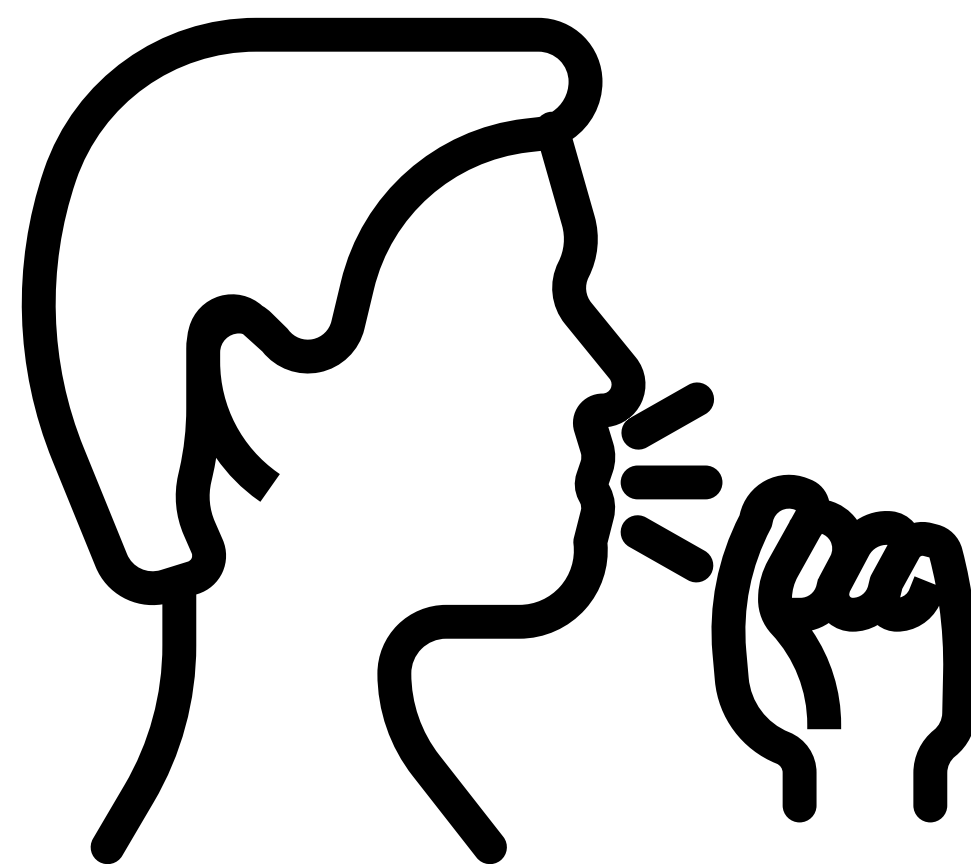
**Laundry & Linen**

## HOW CAN HAIS SPREAD? PART 2

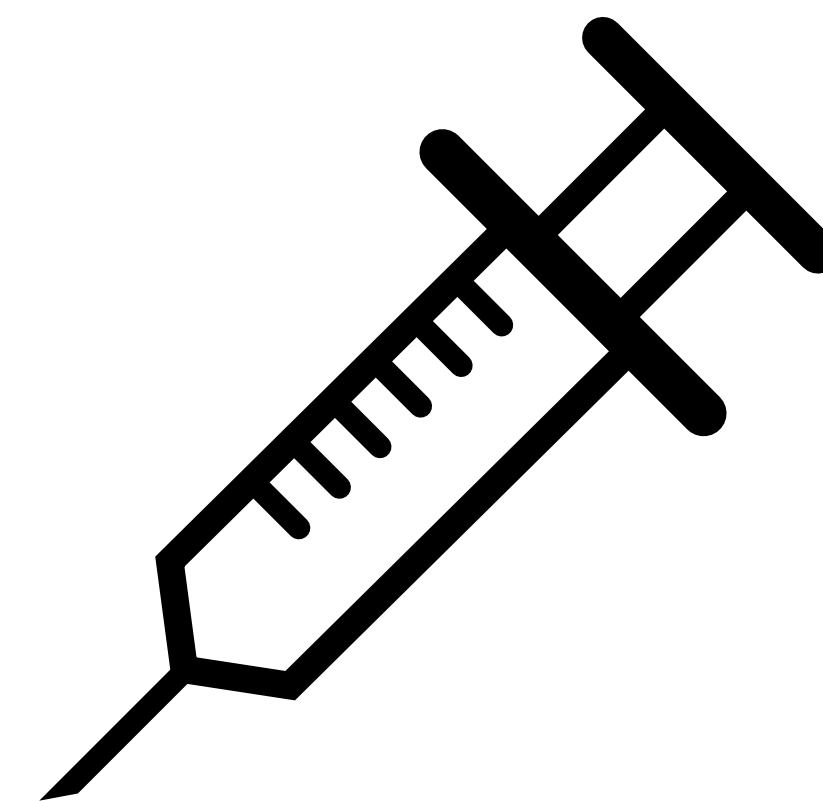
Coming into direct contact with infected surfaces is the leading cause of HAIs. Infection is, therefore, likely to be much higher on premises with improper cleaning and infection control systems in place. Further ways HAIs can spread include:



**Infected  
bathrooms**



**Airborne Pathways**



**Infected Medical  
Equipment**

## CAN YOU ELIMINATE THE SOURCES OF HAIS?

Some sources of HAIs may be eradicated. An example of this is replacing certain door handles with automatic door-opening systems. Implementing these changes where possible can reduce the number of touchpoints that guests, patients and staff have throughout their time at a hospital.

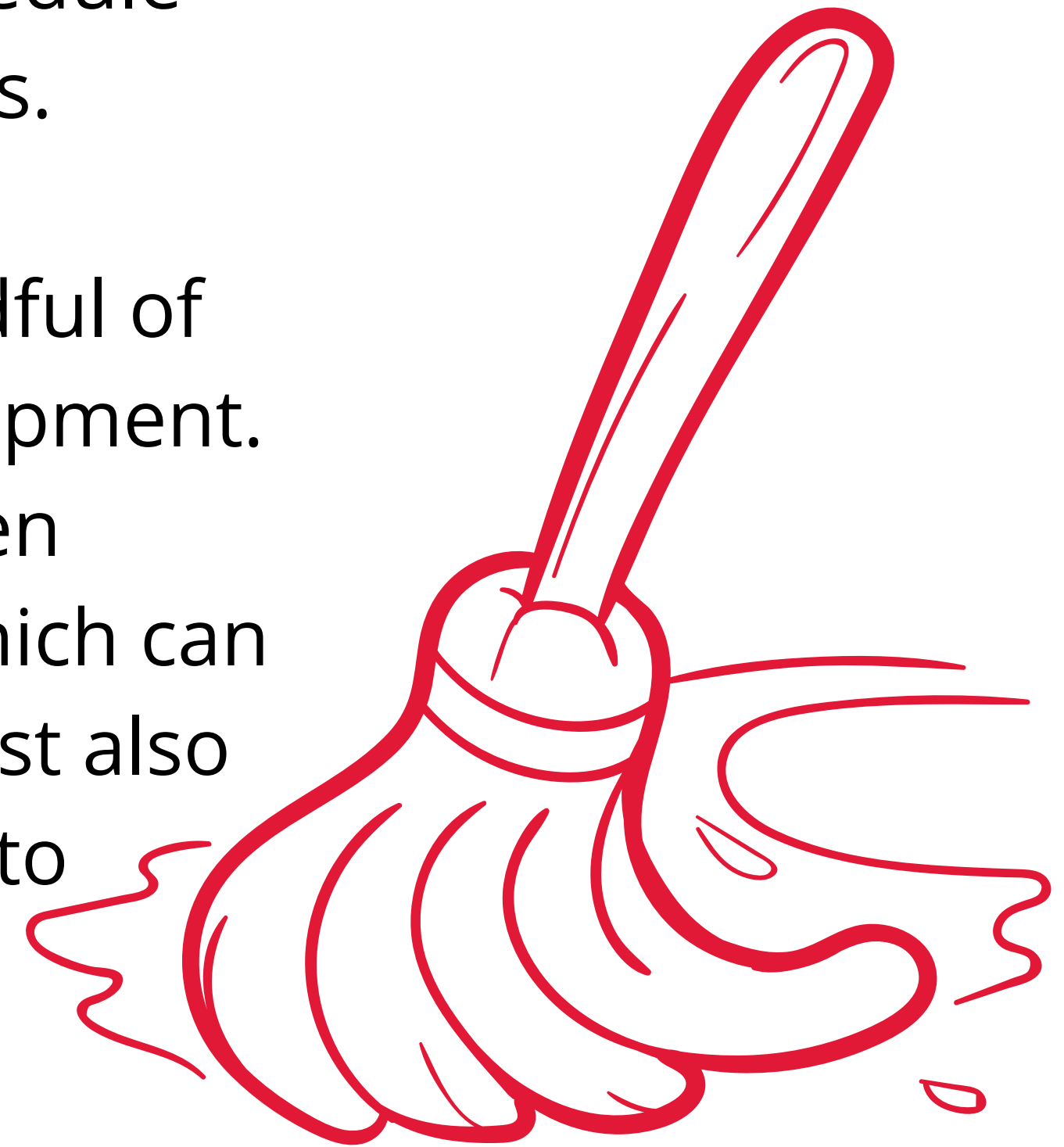
However, some sources of infection are harder to eradicate. This includes but isn't limited to bedside call buttons, TV controllers and toilet flush buttons.



## HOW CAN HEALTHCARE WORKERS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HAIS?

Avoiding HAIs altogether is likely impossible, especially as hospitals are constantly populated with infectious patients. However, having a detailed cleaning schedule and sticking to it is the primary way to reduce HAIs.

Healthcare staff and cleaners should also be mindful of using effective cleaning and infection-control equipment. The Rubbermaid HYGEM Microfibre range has been innovated to pick up pathogens from surfaces, which can reduce the chances of HAIs transmitting. Staff must also use the correct waste bins, mop buckets and PPE to reduce HAIs.



## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD RUBBERMAID HYGEN MICROFIBRE BE USED TO FIGHT HAIS?**

As mentioned, the Rubbermaid HYGEN range specialises in trapping infectious pathogens. Cleaning schedules may indicate that it's best to wipe surfaces regularly for the most effective infection control. However, infection and bacteria can spread in a room as quickly as an instant after it has been deep cleaned and sanitised.

Hospital cleaning staff should watch for catalysts of infection, such as coughing patients, spillages or spoiled food. Actioning these sources immediately and wiping surrounding areas with Rubbermaid HYGEN Microfibre can ensure the risk of transmission is minimised.

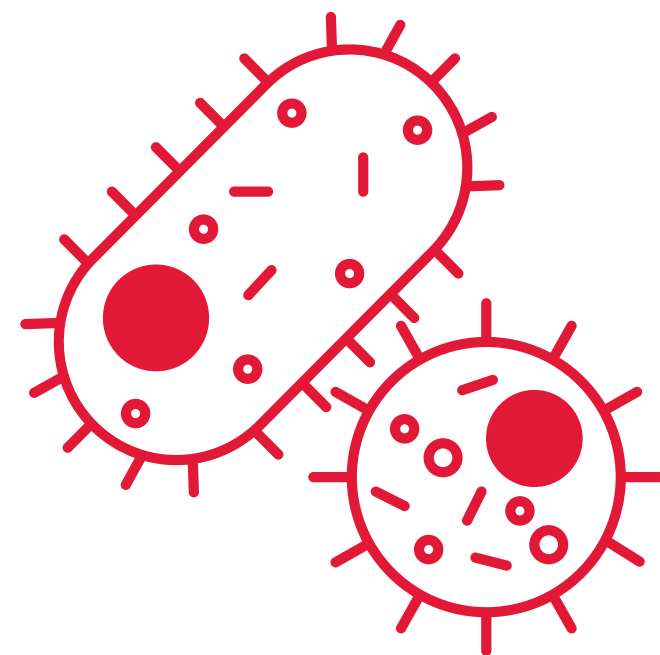
As bacteria cannot be seen, all surfaces, including floors, should be sanitised at a minimum of every two hours to reduce build-ups of bacteria.

## CAN WEARING FACE MASKS REDUCE THE CHANCE OF HAIS?

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was debate about face masks and if they were worthwhile against infections. Studies have shown that face masks, when worn properly over the nose and mouth, can prevent the airborne transmission risk of HAIS.

It is advised that hospital staff, patients and guests wear face masks to avoid HAIs.

However, these individuals must do more than wear face masks. To reduce the spread of HAIs, people should avoid touching their face masks, especially with unwashed hands. They also need to ensure masks are disposed of correctly to prevent bacteria from finding their way onto other surfaces.



At Rubbermaid Commercial, we have a wide range of products that can help reduce the risk of HAIs. Get in contact with a member of our team today to find out which solutions are best for your business.



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