AHRQ Patient Safety Tools and Resources

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) offers practical, research-based tools and resources to help a variety of health care organizations, providers, and others make care safer in all health care settings.

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Building Capacity To Make Care Safer

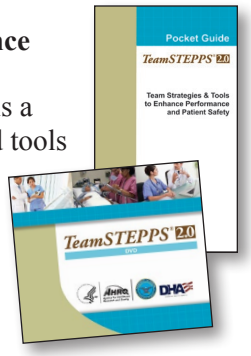
These tools and resources help health care providers understand and benchmark their patient safety efforts, improve team-based care, and use the latest evidence to prevent healthcare-associated infections.

AHRQ Patient Safety Culture Surveys, a suite of staff-administered surveys that help providers in various settings of care examine patient safety culture from the staff perspective, assess the organizational safety culture, identify areas for improvement, and track changes over time. Database reports for the hospital, nursing home, community pharmacy, and medical office surveys provide high-level overviews of trends in survey responses over time.

Surveys available for:

- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Medical offices
- Community pharmacies
- Ambulatory surgery centers

Web: ahrq.gov/qual/patientsafetyculture



Team Strategies and Tools To Enhance Performance and Patient Safety 2.0 (TeamSTEPPS®), a core curriculum, is a customizable program plus specialized tools to reduce risks to patient safety by training clinicians in teamwork and communication skills. Materials include a leader's guide for trainers, a pocket guide of important concepts for trainees, and a multimedia guide featuring training videos to illustrate various concepts. Additional modules address the needs of rapid response teams and staff treating patients with limited English skills. Online modules also are available.

In addition to the core curriculum, the following versions are available:

- Long-term care
- Office-based care

Web: ahrq.gov/teamstepps

YouTube Check out AHRQ's New Patient Safety YouTube Channel
youtube.com/ahrqpatientsafety

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES • USA
AHRQ
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Advancing Excellence in Health Care • www.ahrq.gov
PATIENT SAFETY

The tools and resources listed here are available on the AHRQ Web site. Many are available in print (as noted) free of charge and may be ordered online or through the Agency's Publications Clearinghouse.

To order AHRQ documents, call or write:
AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse

Attn: (publication number)
P.O. Box 8547
Silver Spring, MD. 20907
800-358-9295
703-437-2078 (callers outside the United States only)
888-586-6340 (toll-free TDD service; hearing impaired only)

To order publications online, send an email to:
ahrqpubs@ahrq.hhs.gov

AHRQ's Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program supports projects to advance the science of HAI prevention, develop more effective approaches for reducing HAIs, and help clinicians apply proven methods, including antimicrobial stewardship programs, to prevent HAIs in all settings of care. Projects include efforts to reduce methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium difficile*, carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*, central line-associated bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, and other types of infections in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and ambulatory settings. AHRQ tools and resources are available to help providers prevent HAIs.

Web: ahrq.gov/hai

Patient Safety Organizations (PSOs) were established under the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 to improve the quality and safety of health care by encouraging clinicians and health care organizations to voluntarily report patient safety events without fear of legal discovery. Administered by AHRQ, PSOs offer a secure environment to identify and reduce the risks associated with patient care. As independent, external experts, PSOs collect, analyze, and aggregate patient safety data locally, regionally, and nationally to develop insights into the underlying causes of patient safety events.

Web: pso.ahrq.gov

Measuring Patient Safety

These resources have been developed to help measure aspects of safety at the institution or local level. Measures of safety and quality are increasingly being publicly reported and featured in value-based purchasing programs.

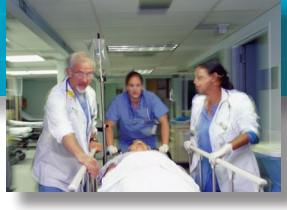
Common Formats are specifications used to collect patient safety event information in a standard way, using common language, definitions, technical requirements for electronic implementation, and reporting. The common formats can be used to collect data on all types of adverse events, near misses and unsafe conditions in hospitals, nursing homes, and more.

Web: pso.ahrq.gov/common

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) is a suite of surveys originally developed by AHRQ and designed to measure patients' experiences of their care, including communication with doctors and nurses, responsiveness of staff, and other indicators of safe, high-quality care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has introduced star ratings on its Hospital Compare Web site that are based on data from CAHPS. Surveys can be customized with various item sets to address specific conditions or populations and are available for the following settings:

- Hospitals
- Clinicians and group practices
- Health plans
- Nursing homes
- Home health
- Surgical care
- Dialysis centers

Web: cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/index.html



Quality Indicators™ can highlight potential quality concerns, identify areas that need further study and investigation, and track changes over time through publicly available no-cost software programs. Modules available include:

Patient Safety Indicators reflect quality of care inside hospitals to focus on potentially avoidable complications and healthcare-associated events.

- **Prevention Quality Indicators** identify hospital admissions that evidence suggests may have been avoided through access to high-quality outpatient care.
- **Inpatient Quality Indicators** reflect quality of care inside hospitals including inpatient mortality for medical conditions and surgical procedures.
- **Pediatric Quality Indicators** use indicators from the other three modules with adaptations for use among children and neonates to reflect quality of care inside hospitals and identify potentially avoidable hospitalizations.

Web: qualityindicators.ahrq.gov

Toolkit for Hospitals: Improving Performance on the AHRQ Quality Indicators™ helps hospitals understand AHRQ's Quality Indicators and how to use them to identify areas of concern in need of further investigation, and monitor progress over time.

Web: ahrq.gov/qual/qitoolkit

Addressing Priority Areas

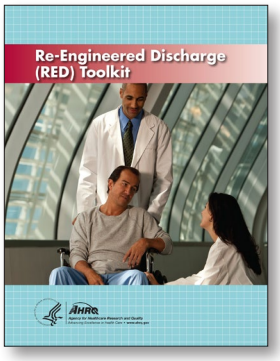
These tools help staff in hospitals, emergency departments, long-term care facilities, and ambulatory settings to prevent avoidable complications of care. They also address priority areas that have been identified as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Partnership for Patients and value-based purchasing programs.

Tools for Hospitals

Preventing Avoidable Hospital Readmissions can be used to make the hospital discharge process safer and to prevent avoidable readmissions.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DKE3

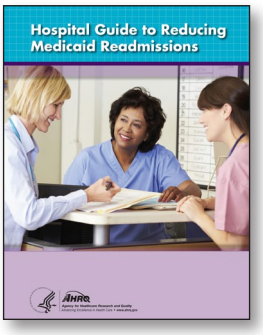
- **Re-Engineered Discharge Toolkit** is a research-based tool to assist hospitals, including those that serve diverse populations, in improving their hospital discharge process and reducing avoidable readmissions.



Print: AHRQ Publication No. 12(13)-0084
Web: go.usa.gov/2Q3d

- **Taking Care of Myself: A Guide for When I Leave the Hospital** is an easy-to-read guide to help nurses or discharge advocates work with patients to track medication schedules, upcoming medical appointments, and important phone numbers after they leave the hospital.

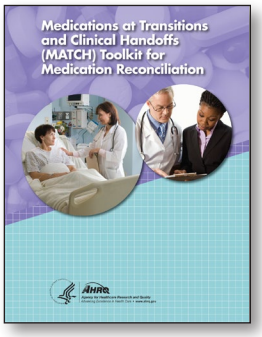
Print: AHRQ Publication No. 10-0059-C
Web: ahrq.gov/qual/goinghomeguide.htm
ahrq.gov/qual/goinghomesp.htm (Spanish)



- **Hospital Guide to Reducing Medicaid Readmissions** provides evidence-based strategies to reduce readmissions among the adult Medicaid population.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DKGF

Medications at Transitions and Clinical Handoffs (MATCH) Toolkit features strategies from the field that can help hospitals improve medication reconciliation processes for patients as they move through the health care system.



Print: AHRQ Publication No. 11(12)-0059
Web: ahrq.gov/qual/match

Preventing Falls in Hospitals: A Toolkit for Improving Quality of Care focuses on overcoming the challenges associated with developing, implementing, and sustaining a fall prevention program. Includes an implementation guide to help put prevention strategies into practice.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DKAY

Preventing Pressure Ulcers in Hospitals is a toolkit that assists hospital staff in implementing effective pressure ulcer prevention practices through an interdisciplinary approach to care.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DKAB

Preventing Hospital-Acquired Venous Thromboembolism: A Guide for Effective Quality Improvement outlines the latest evidence on how to lead a quality improvement effort to prevent hospital-acquired venous thromboembolism.

Web: ahrq.gov/qual/vtguide

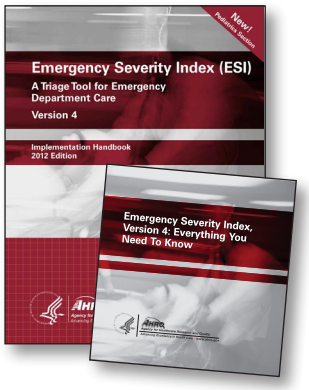
Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program (CUSP) Toolkit, created for clinicians by clinicians, this core toolkit includes customizable training tools that build the capacity to address safety issues by combining clinical best practices, the science of safety, and attention to safety culture. Used together this method can improve the foundation of how physicians, nurses, and other clinical team members work together.

Specialized tools are available or in development to prevent the following conditions and improve care in these settings:

- Central line-associated bloodstream infections in hospital ICUs
- Catheter-associated urinary tract infections in hospitals and long-term care settings
- Mechanical ventilator-associated conditions
- Infections or complications following surgery in hospitals or ambulatory surgery centers
- Perinatal safety

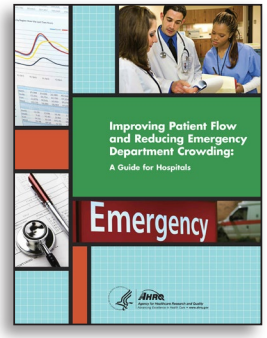
Web: ahrq.gov/cusptoolkit

Tools for Emergency Departments



Emergency Severity Index (ESI): A Triage Tool for Emergency Department Care, Version 4 is a five-level emergency department triage algorithm. The ESI tool, which includes an implementation manual and DVD, helps hospital emergency department staff rapidly identify patients in need of immediate attention, better identify patients who could safely and more efficiently be seen in a fast-track or urgent care center rather than the main emergency department, and more accurately determine thresholds for diversion of ambulance patients from the emergency department.

Web: ahrq.gov/research/esi/esi1.htm



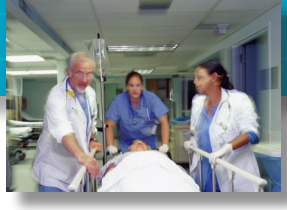
Improving Patient Flow and Reducing Emergency Department Crowding: A Guide for Hospitals presents step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing patient flow improvement strategies to alleviate crowded emergency departments.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 11(12)-0094
Web: ahrq.gov/qual/ptflow/index.html

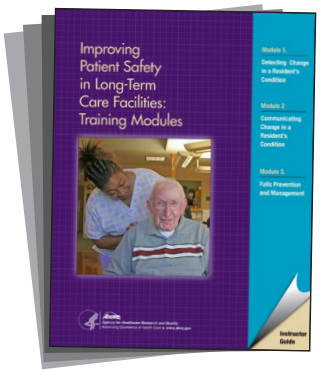
Tools for Long-Term Care Facilities

Falls Management Program: A Quality Improvement Initiative for Nursing Facilities is an interdisciplinary quality improvement initiative to assist nursing facilities in providing individualized, person-centered care and improving their fall care processes and outcomes through educational and quality improvement tools.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DKAw



Improving Patient Safety in Long- Term Care Facilities is a training curriculum for front-line personnel in nursing home and other long-term care facilities to help them detect and communicate changes in a resident's condition and prevent and manage falls. Includes an Instructor Guide and separate student workbooks.



Print: AHRQ Publication No. 12-0001-1
Web: go.usa.gov/3DkYw

AHRQ's Safety Program for Nursing Homes: On-Time Pressure Ulcer Prevention is a team training curriculum to help nursing homes with electronic medical records reduce the occurrence of pressure ulcers.

Web: go.usa.gov/3Dk4k

Tools for Ambulatory Care Settings

The **Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) Survey on Patient Safety Culture** is a new survey in the suite of AHRQ Surveys on Patient Safety Culture. The survey, designed specifically for ASC staff, asks for opinions about the culture of patient safety at their centers. The survey can be used to raise staff awareness about patient safety, assess the status of patient safety culture, identify strengths and areas for improvement, examine trends, evaluate the cultural impact of patient safety initiatives and interventions, and conduct comparisons within and across organizations.

Web: go.usa.gov/3WV8B

Improving Your Office Lab Testing Process Ambulatory Toolkit increases the reliability of the lab testing process within a medical office with step-by-step guidance. Includes checklists and materials to help communicate with patients.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 13-0035
Web: go.usa.gov/3DkWR

AHRQ Patient Safety Culture Surveys include several staff-administered surveys specifically designed for ambulatory care providers in nursing homes, medical offices, and community pharmacies.

Web: go.usa.gov/3DkZm

TeamSTEPPS® for Office-Based Care adapts the core concepts of the TeamSTEPPS program to reflect the environment of office-based teams.

Web: ahrq.gov/teamsteppstools/officebasedcare/

Engaging Patients and Families in Their Care

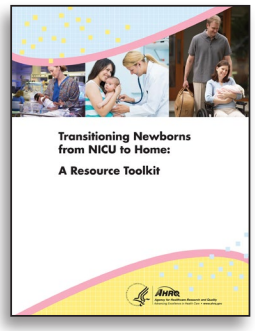
Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Hospital Quality and Safety helps hospitals work as partners with patients and families to improve quality and safety. Includes an implementation handbook and tools for patients, families, and clinicians.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 13-0033
Web: ahrq.gov/qual/engagingptfam.htm

Developing a Community-Based Patient Safety Advisory Council provides approaches for hospitals and other health care organizations to use to develop a community-based advisory council that can drive change for patient safety through education, collaboration, and consumer engagement.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 08-0048
Web: ahrq.gov/qual/advisorycouncil

Transitioning Newborns From NICU to Home: A Resource Toolkit provides customizable resources to help hospitals and families safely transition newborns out of the neonatal intensive care unit to home using a Health Coach Program.

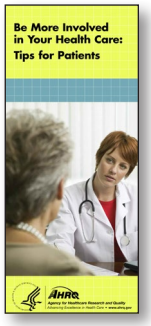


Web: go.usa gov/3Dk8W

AHRQ's Questions Are the Answer materials are designed to improve communication between patients and clinicians to help make health care safer.

Web: ahrq.gov/consumer/beinvolvedsp.htm

The resources below are available in bulk for use by clinicians and health care organizations that want to help their patients receive safe care. To order free samples or multicopy bundles, call AHRQ's Publications Clearinghouse at 800-358-9295 or send an email that includes the title and AHRQ Publication No. to ahrqpubs@ahrq.hhs.gov.



Be More Involved in Your Health Care: Tips for Patients, a brochure that gives patients tips to use before, during, and after a medical appointment to get the best possible care.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 10(11)-0094-A
Web: go.usa.gov/3DkXw

My Questions for This Visit, 50-sheet notepads designed for use in physician offices to help patients identify the three questions they want to remember to ask during medical visits.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 10(11)-0094-1
AHRQ Publication No. 10(11)-0094-2 (Spanish)
Web: go.usa.gov/3Dk5j
go.usa.gov/3Dk5V (Spanish)

Waiting Room Video—A DVD that features a 7-minute video of patients and clinicians discussing the importance of asking questions and sharing information

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 10(12)-0094-DVD
Web: go.usa.gov/3Dk5h

Conozca las preguntas (Know the Questions), a Spanish-language companion site to Questions Are the Answer, encourages Hispanics to go to the doctor and ask questions to achieve better health outcomes. The Web site features tips on how to talk with doctors and questions to ask when receiving medical care.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 10(11)-0094-B
Web: ahrq.gov/preguntas

Your Medicine: Be Smart. Be Safe. answers common questions about getting and taking medicines; includes a handy form to help patients keep track of their medicines.

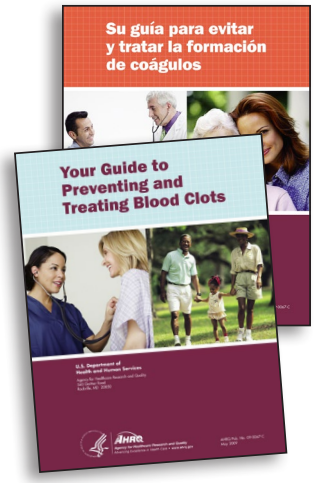
Print: AHRQ Publication No. 11-0049-A
AHRQ Publication No. 11-0049-B (Spanish)
Web: go.usa.gov/3DknT
go.usa.gov/3DQuw (Spanish)

Blood Thinner Pills: Your Guide to Using Them Safely explains, in both English and Spanish, what patients can expect while taking blood thinner medication.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 09-0086-C
Web: go.usa.gov/3DkhV

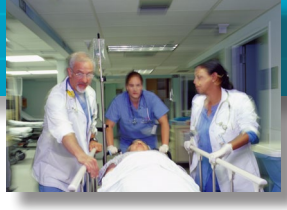
Staying Active and Healthy With Blood Thinners is a 10-minute video that features easy-to-understand explanations, in English and Spanish, of how blood thinners work and why it is important to take them correctly. It also introduces BEST, an easy way to remember how to fit blood thinner medication into daily life.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 09-0086-DVD
Web: go.usa.gov/3D8q4
go.usa.gov/3D83C (Spanish)



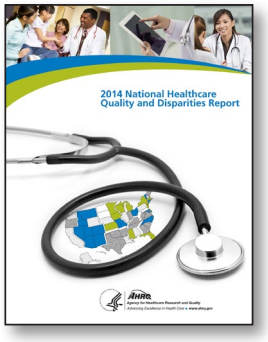
Your Guide to Preventing and Treating Blood Clots discusses ways to prevent, treat, and recognize symptoms of blood clots. It also describes medications used to prevent blood clots and their side effects.

Print: AHRQ Publication No. 09-0067-C
Web: go.usa.gov/3D8W4
go.usa.gov/3D8NH (Spanish)



General Patient Safety/Quality Resources

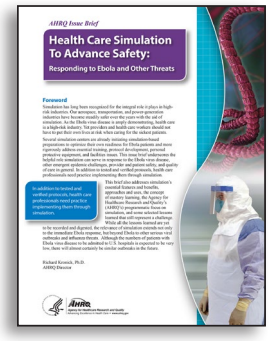
National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report
Congressionally mandated report that presents trends and disparities in the effectiveness, safety, timeliness, patient-centeredness, and efficiency of care based on more than 250 measures of care.



Web: go.usa.gov/3D8P5

- **Patient Safety Chartbook**, a companion report, presents data in easy to understand graphic format.

  Web: ahrq.gov/2014PSChartbook

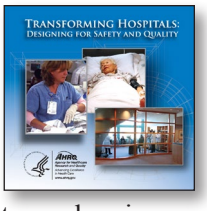


Health Care Simulation To Advance Safety: Responding to Ebola and Other Threats explains how using simulation in emergency preparedness can help health care teams and facilities respond to Ebola and other serious threats to the health care system.

Web: go.usa.gov/3D8VQ

Making Health Care Safer II: An Updated Critical Analysis of the Evidence for Patient Safety Practices presents the latest evidence on 41 proven patient safety strategies, 10 of which are supported by enough evidence that an expert panel says they should be adopted by health systems to reduce patient harm. The report updates Evidence-based Practice Center Report (#43), the first systematic assessment of patient safety practices.

Web: go.usa.gov/3D8dG



Transforming Hospitals: Designing for Safety and Quality presents the experiences of three model hospitals that incorporated evidence-based design elements into their construction and renovation projects. This DVD is an especially useful tool for hospitals that are planning capital construction projects or renovations.

DVD: AHRQ Publication No. 07-0076-DVD

Resident Duty Hours: Enhancing Sleep, Supervision, and Safety, an AHRQ-funded report from the Institute of Medicine, recommends changes to resident work hours and training programs to enhance patient safety.

Web: books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12508&page=R1

AHRQ Patient Safety Network (AHRQ PSNet) is a national Web-based resource that features the latest news and essential resources on patient safety, including weekly literature updates, news, tools, and meetings; Patient Safety Primers; and a vast set of carefully annotated links to important research and other information on patient safety.

Web: psnet.ahrq.gov

AHRQ Web M&M (Morbidity and Mortality Rounds on the Web) is a no cost, peer-reviewed online journal and forum on patient safety and health care quality that features expert analysis of medical errors that readers report anonymously and interactive learning modules. Continuing medical education and continuing education unit credits are offered.

Web: WebMM.ahrq.gov

Health Care Comes Home: The Human Factors is an AHRQ-funded report from the National Research Council that offers recommendations for system improvements to address the most prevalent and serious threats to safety and quality of care provided in the home environment.

Web: go.usa.gov/3D8em

AHRQ Pub. No. 15-M021-EF
April 2015