[IMAGE]

Infections: Could Your Hospital Be Doing More to Prevent Them?

By Editorial Staff

There aren't many people who enjoy being at a hospital, probably because it means only a few things: either you've suffered a health crisis or someone you know has. (Birth is probably one of the few events that makes a hospital visit enjoyable, at least after the baby is born.) With that said, if you conducted a survey, you'd likely discover that the majority considers a hospital one of the most reassuring places to go when there's something wrong; after all, surrounded by doctors, nurses and all types of equipment, is there any better place to be if your health is in question?

infections with mask - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Not so fast. According to a recent study, thousands die each year from preventable - yes, preventable - hospital infections. By "hospital infections," we mean you acquired the infection while in the hospital; it wasn't your reason for going there in the first place, and it wasn't an inevitable consequence of your condition. The study, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* earlier this year, suggests 48,000 Americans (a conservative estimate, according to the study authors) die annually from hospital-acquired infections, most of which are attributable to the use of ventilators and catheters.

If you think there's nothing that can be done, consider that according to Dr. Peter Pronovost, a researcher at Johns Hopkins, these infections can be all but eliminated with simple hygiene measures and a hospital-wide team approach. One can only hope hospitals nationwide are doing everything in their power to make sure 48,000 deaths becomes zero deaths as soon as possible.

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