

Hospital specific Infection Information on Hospital Compare Tips for finding your hospital's information

The U.S. Government discloses information about health care-acquired infections (HAIs) at hospitals across the country on the [Hospital Compare](#) website. This information includes almost all hospitals in the country; most of those excluded are small hospitals or children's hospitals. Even though this is a "Medicare" website, the infections reported here include all patients who were served by hospitals that also serve Medicare patients. Some hospitals have more information because they are in a state that has required reporting for a longer time than the federal reporting. The information on each hospital is updated quarterly, providing a rolling 12 month Standardized Infection Ratio (SIR) and other information like the number of infections at each hospital. The web site will provide information on other hospital-acquired infections in the future.

To find the hospital infection information on this website:

1. Go to <http://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare>
2. Enter a zip code and select the yellow "Search Hospitals" button. You can also go directly to an individual hospital by entering its name.
3. Check 3 hospitals to compare (the system only allows you to compare 3 at a time), then select the yellow "Compare now" button
4. Select the tab "Readmissions, Complications, and deaths"
5. Scroll all the way down to find "Healthcare Associated Infections"
6. This page compares hospitals to the US National benchmark that was set almost 5 years ago, using data from 2006-8. Hospitals that have improved ("better than"), those that have not improved ("same as"), and those that are worse.
7. For additional information, select the green "view more details" button, which will show how many infections occurred and the exact calculation of the SIR. The exact SIR can tell you how far the hospital is from the baseline (1) in either direction (lower numbers are better), and whether that difference is statistically significant. The closer to zero (the ultimate goal), the better.
8. Select the "X close window" box to get back to the original chart.
9. Then you can select the "view graphs" button, which will take you to graphs with "confidence intervals" that are very confusing. Since all hospitals have to report all HAIs in the various categories, a confidence level is not pertinent, in our opinion. The confidence level is set for each hospital individually. Hospitals with large denominators (in this case, many patients with central lines, or catheters or many surgical procedures) will have the narrowest confidence level and those with small denominators may be less reliable. However, this graph does include an interesting piece of information: the statewide SIR. This shows whether hospitals in that state (taken aggregately) have moved from the "national benchmark." It also allows a more real time comparison among hospitals within a state (as opposed to comparing to an SIR set more than 5 years ago).
10. If your hospital has "not available" then check the footnote for it. Some of this is due to a small number of patients or procedures. In the early 2013 update of this data central line days were not available, which prevented some of the charts from being completed.

Or you could go to Consumer Reports and find more consumer-friendly information on nearly 4,000 hospitals in all states, including infection information and a safety score for more than 2,000 hospitals, see [Consumer Reports Ratings](#) (available to Consumer Reports subscribers). Also see [hospital survival guide](#) for free advice on staying safe in the hospital.