



Ventilator Associated Pneumonia

Ventilator Associated Pneumonia is a lung infection that develops in a person who is on a ventilator. A ventilator is a machine that is used to help a patient breathe by giving oxygen through a tube placed in a patient's mouth or nose, or through a hole in the front of the neck. An infection may occur if germs enter through the tube and get into the patient's lungs.

Ventilator Associated Pneumonia is a complication of care that hospitals are trying hard to prevent. Some of the things hospitals do to prevent Ventilator Associated Pneumonia include:

- Keeping the head of the patient's bed raised between 30 and 45 degrees unless other medical conditions do not allow this to occur
- Checking the patient's ability to breathe on his or her own every day so that the patient can be taken off of the ventilator as soon as possible
- Making sure that health care workers clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after touching the patient or the ventilator
- Cleaning the inside of the patient's mouth on a regular basis
- Cleaning or replacing equipment between use on different patients

Union Hospital has these strategies in place to prevent Ventilator Associated Pneumonia.

No one plans for themselves or a loved one to be on a ventilator. However, Ventilator Associated Pneumonia can be prevented with the following measures:

- Quit smoking. Patients who smoke get more infections. Seek information about how to quit smoking before having surgery as some patients are ventilators during and/or after surgery
- If healthcare providers do not clean their hands, ask them to do so

At Union Hospital, we strive for no Ventilator Associated Pneumonia. Unlike many hospital acquired infection measures, hospitals are currently not required to publically report incidence of Ventilator Associated Pneumonia to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Therefore no data is available to compare hospitals.