

DID YOU KNOW?

Decreasing Pathogen Transmission From Stethoscopes. Stethoscopes, which can commonly harbor bacteria, have direct contact with patients' skin and could be a mechanism for pathogen transmission among patients and health care workers;¹ however, evidence indicates that a minority of health care workers routinely disinfect their stethoscopes.² AORN recommends that stethoscopes be cleaned before use with each patient according to the manufacturer's instructions for use.¹ Chemical disinfectants, including triclosan, chlorhexidine, isopropyl alcohol, ethyl alcohol, sodium hypochlorite, and benzalkonium chloride, have been shown to decrease bacteria on stethoscopes.³ Additional approaches to decrease pathogen transmission may include the use of antimicrobial copper stethoscope surfaces, devices emitting ultraviolet C light, and disposable diaphragm barriers.^{2,3}

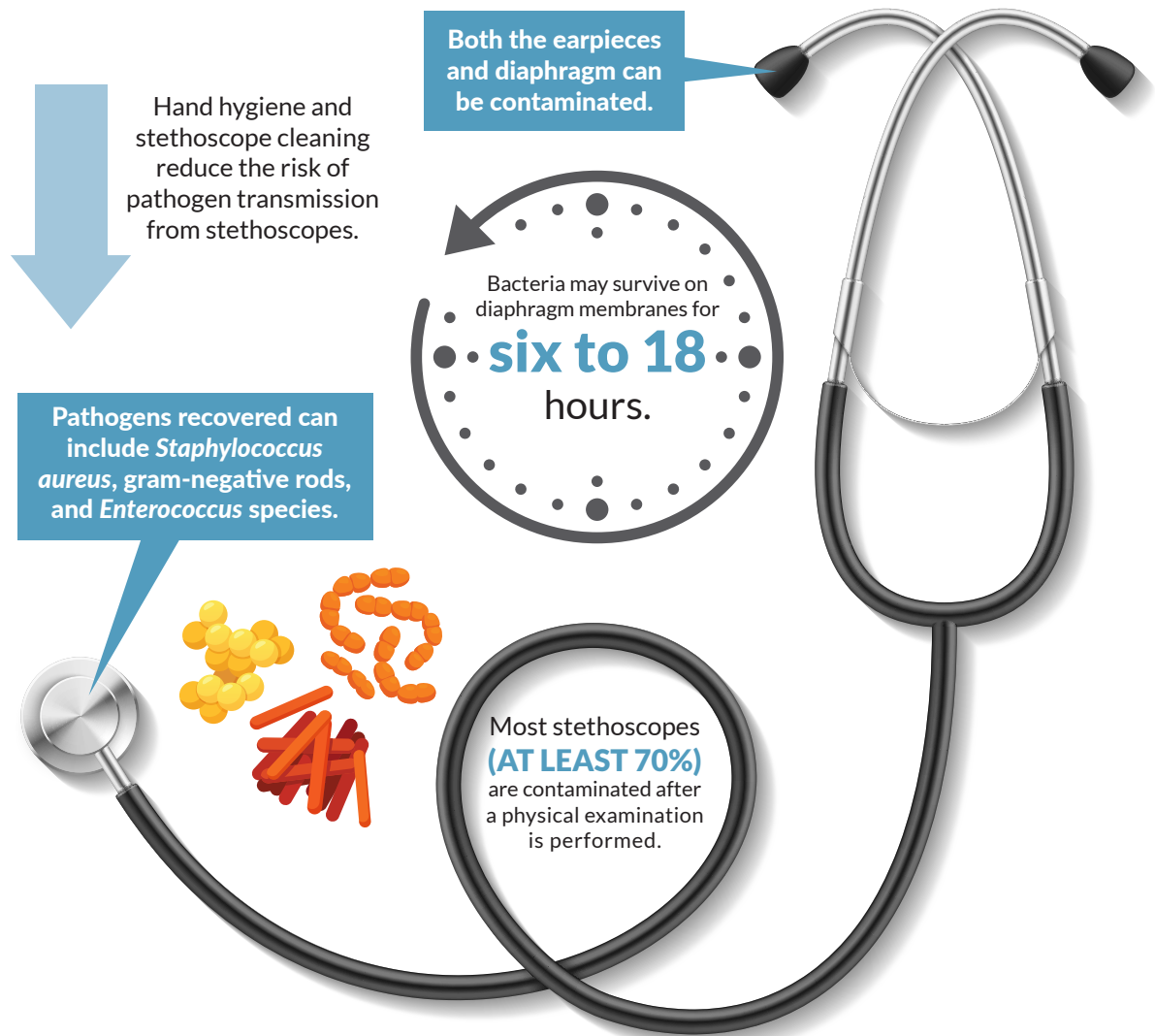


Figure 1. Facts about stethoscope contamination.^{1,2}

References

1. Guideline for surgical attire. In: *Guidelines for Perioperative Practice*. Denver, CO: AORN, Inc; 2022:1089-1106.
2. Horiuchi Y, Wettersten N, Vasudevan RS, Barnett O, Maisel AS. Stethoscope as a vector for infectious disease. *Curr Emerg Hosp Med Rep*. 2018;6:120-125.
3. Napolitani M, Bezzini D, Moirano F, Bedogni C, Messina G. Methods of disinfecting stethoscopes: systematic review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020;17(6):1856. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17061856>.