Data from exposure incidents are tracked and monitored, and exposure incident reports are reviewed by applicable personnel and reported to hospital leaders. Information from incident reports is used to evaluate processes that contributed to or caused the blood or body fluid exposure incident, and changes are made to decrease the likelihood of a repeat occurrence. Staff are educated on these changes.

Measurable Elements of PCI.05.01

1. The hospital identifies processes that could result in patient or staff exposure to blood and body fluids.
2. The hospital implements practices to reduce the risk of exposure to blood and body fluids.
3. The hospital uses an expeditious process for reporting patient, staff, and visitor exposures to blood and body fluids that is timely.
4. The hospital uses a process for acting on patient, staff, and visitor exposures to blood and body fluids.
5. Staff are educated in the process for reporting an exposure incident.
6. Ⓓ The hospital tracks and monitors incidents of patient and staff exposures to blood and body fluids.
7. Reports of exposure incidents are reviewed, and actions are taken to minimize the risk of future exposures to blood and body fluids.

Food Services

Standard PCI.06.00

The hospital reduces the risk of infections associated with the operations of food and dietetics services.

Intent of PCI.06.00

Improperly stored and prepared food can cause illnesses, through transmission of pathogens by personnel handling and preparing food or through food-borne microorganisms. Food illnesses can be dangerous and even life-threatening to hospitalized patients whose conditions are already compromised due to illness, disease, or injury. The hospital must provide for the safe and accurate provision of food and nutrition products by ensuring that the food is stored, prepared, and transported in a manner that prevents transmission of pathogens and at temperatures that prevent the risk of microbial growth.

Hospital leaders must understand the food supply chain from start to finish to ensure safe operations of food services. Hospital leaders must also understand how employee illnesses are managed in accordance with hospital policies and procedures, evidence-based guidelines, and applicable laws and regulations to avoid transmission of infection such as hepatitis A and other pathogens that can be transmitted by personnel through food handling, as leaders are ultimately accountable for ensuring that these processes are consistently followed.

The hospital must ensure careful selection of food sources and suppliers, and safe food storage, handling, and preparation processes. There must be a process to ensure integrity of the food supply chain; this includes temperature stability during transport to the hospital, mechanisms to prevent tampering with food, and proper storage containers during transport. Hospitals must ensure appropriate temperatures of prepared food during transport from the kitchen to patients. This can be done in many ways; for example, kitchen staff may conduct random audits and check the temperature of several meals when they leave the kitchen and before they are served to the patient. There must also be a process to ensure that food is not left out for a length of time that would make it unsuitable for consumption. For example, the hospital must ensure that hot and cold foods waiting for consumption must be maintained at safe temperatures for the duration of service. Safe food storage must include maintaining items at appropriate temperatures and protection from pest infestation, and it may include following such principles as first in, first out (FIFO), which helps ensure that food is used before its expiration date. An effective food rotation system is essential for storing food to prevent food-borne illness.

Cross contamination, particularly from raw foods to cooked foods, is another source of foodborne illness; hospital leaders implement practices to minimize this risk and ensure that any suppliers and vendors do so as well. In addition to mixing raw and prepared foods, cross contamination can result from contaminated hands, surfaces on which food is prepared such as countertops and cutting boards, or cloths used to wipe countertops or dry dishes. The utensils, appliances, pots, and pans used for preparing food, and the trays, dishes, and utensils used for serving food can also be a risk for infection if not properly cleaned and sanitized. Personnel who are ill, or who do not perform appropriate hand hygiene, can also transmit infection when handling food. The hospital must have a process, including policies and procedures, to ensure that ill personnel do not handle food. The hospital conducts a risk assessment when food is stored or prepared outside of central kitchen areas, including patient refrigerators, and implements protocols to mitigate risk related to this practice.

Some nutritional products, such as human milk, baby formula, and other enteral nutrition products, have special storage and preparation requirements. Staff refer to professional guidelines to identify safe handling criteria for these products, including storage temperature, length of storage, preparation technique, proper labeling, and administration guidelines.

The food and nutrition program must be integrated with the infection prevention and control program and the employee health program.

Measurable Elements of PCI.06.00

1. Ⓓ The hospital stores food and nutrition products in a manner that reduces the risk of infection, including those stored outside of the kitchen and food preparation areas.
2. The hospital adopts and implements kitchen sanitation measures and guidelines for preparation areas to prevent the risk of cross contamination and infection.
3. Ⓓ The hospital prepares food and nutrition products using proper sanitation and temperature.
4. The hospital uses a process to ensure that proper food temperature is maintained during the preparation, transportation, and distribution process.
5. Professional guidelines are adopted for nutritional products that have special storage and preparation requirements, such as human milk, baby formula, and other enteral products.

Transmission of Infections

Standard PCI.07.00

The hospital protects patients, visitors, and staff from transmission of infections and communicable diseases.

Intent of PCI.07.00

In addition to the use of standard precautions, transmission-based precautions must be used to prevent infection transmission based on the type of microorganism (for example, use of negative pressure rooms and N95 masks for airborne infectious diseases). Transmission-based precautions include all potential modes of transmission, such as contact, droplet, and airborne. They also include special considerations such as *Clostridioides difficile* precautions. Airborne pathogens such as tuberculosis and COVID-19 require negative air pressure isolation rooms to prevent transmission because these pathogens can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time. (For additional considerations regarding highly significant emerging or novel diseases such as COVID-19, *see* Standard PCI.07.02.)

Transmission-based precautions are initiated upon suspicion or diagnosis of infections and include the following:

- Contact precautions for patients with known or suspected infections transmitted via contact
- Airborne precautions for patients with known or suspected infections transmitted via the airborne route