

News from the NHSN Helpdesk

Positive Blood Culture FAQs Part 1: Data Collection

Use of surveillance data is an important part of facility, regional, and national infection prevention efforts. Monitoring and tracking infections with complete and accurate data is essential.

What does the NHSN Dialysis Event Protocol require?

For your hemodialysis outpatients, report **all** positive blood cultures from specimens collected as an outpatient or **collected on the day of or day following a hospital admission**. Positive blood cultures should be reported regardless of whether or not a true infection is suspected or whether the infection is thought to be related to hemodialysis.

What is a positive blood culture?

- A positive blood culture is the **isolation of a microorganism** from a blood specimen, **even if the organism is thought to be a contaminant**.

What are some settings where reportable positive blood cultures can occur?

- Your outpatient dialysis facility
- Hospitals
 - Emergency department
 - On the day of or the day after a hospital admission
- Other outpatient settings where your patients regularly receive care
 - Doctor's office and Nursing Home
 - Let providers in these settings know that all PBCs need to be reported back to the dialysis center

Did You Know?

Many dialysis facilities have partnered with local hospitals to access hospital electronic medical records, reducing data collection burden and improving data quality.



Tips for developing a process to collect positive blood culture information from other settings....

- Follow-up with other healthcare settings where you know your patient regularly receives care
 - Determine the reason for any IV antibiotic prescribed to your patients
- Ask patients if they were in an emergency department or hospital since their last treatment
- Determine which hospitals are most frequently visited by your patients
 - Investigate whether your facility can gain access to those hospitals' electronic medical record systems
 - Develop a relationship with the infection preventionists at those hospitals

When should I not report a positive blood culture?

- Do not report positive blood cultures **collected as an inpatient after the 2nd day of a hospital admission**.
- Do not report positive blood cultures in violation of the 21 day rule:
 - For a given patient, there **must be 21 or more days between the first reported positive blood culture event date and the next positive blood culture event date** for the second event to be reported separately to NHSN.
 - Any additional positive blood cultures from specimens drawn within those 21 days are not reported as separate events. However, new information from these subsequent cultures, including different microorganisms, are added to that patient's last reported positive blood culture event.



Questions? Email the NHSN Helpdesk at nhsn@cdc.gov with "Dialysis" in the subject line and we will respond to your inquiry within 5 business days.