

News from the NHSN Help Desk

How to Improve Positive Blood Culture Surveillance in Your Facility

Your facility is responsible for reporting positive blood cultures among your in-center hemodialysis outpatients. This includes positive blood cultures from specimens that were collected in any outpatient setting or on the day of or on the day after a hospital admission.

Therefore, the Dialysis Event form prompts you to answer the following question when reporting a positive blood culture:

Positive blood culture (*specify organism and antimicrobial susceptibilities on pages 2-3)
*Suspected source of positive blood culture (check one):
 Vascular access A source other than the vascular access Contamination Uncertain
Where was this positive blood culture collected?
 Dialysis clinic Hospital (on the day of or the day following admission) or E.D. Other location

Q1: Other than the dialysis clinic, where could my hemodialysis outpatient have a positive blood culture that my facility is responsible for reporting?

- Hospital (on the day of or the day following admission) or E.D. –
 - Including the emergency department (E.D.) or blood specimens collected on the day of or the day after a hospital admission
- Other location –
 - Other outpatient locations such as a physician’s office, or a nursing home

Q2: How can I improve my facility’s surveillance for positive blood cultures?

- Follow up on every hospitalization for every patient
 - Ask your patients if they went to the hospital since their last treatment
 - Request hospital microbiology lab results that include pathogen and susceptibility information
 - Develop communication strategies with infection preventionists and other staff at local hospitals
 - Investigate opportunities to share the electronic medical record system with local hospitals
- Collect blood samples for culture whenever a bloodstream infection is suspected and before antimicrobials are administered
- Remember, a positive blood culture should be reported regardless of whether or not a true infection is suspected or whether the infection is thought to be related to hemodialysis



Questions about NHSN? 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.