

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.