Keeping Patients Safe from Contaminated Mattresses

Hospital bed mattress covers provide outer protection to mattresses used on hospital beds. Worn or damaged covers can let fluids inside the mattress, posing a risk of infection to patients who may come into contact with a contaminated mattress. Follow the tips below to help keep covers in good condition and to identify and handle covers that are worn or damaged.

Develop an Inspection Plan

- Create an inspection plan for all hospital bed mattresses and mattress covers in your facility.
- Check the manufacturers' guidelines for an expected life time on the hospital bed mattress and mattress covers and follow any additional recommendations listed there.
- Contact the mattress cover manufacturer for any additional questions not covered here.

Inspect

- Regularly check each hospital bed mattress cover for any visible signs of damage or wear such as cuts, tears, cracks, pinholes, snags, or stains.
- Routinely remove the hospital bed mattress cover and check its inside surface. Once the mattress cover is removed, inspect the mattress for wet spots, staining, or signs of damage or wear. Check all sides and the bottom of the mattress.
- Be aware that it may be difficult to identify damaged or soiled mattresses without removing the mattress covers first. Mattress covers tend to be dark in color, making it hard to see what lies underneath.

Remove and Replace

- Remove any damaged, worn, or visibly stained hospital bed mattress according to the healthcare facility's procedures and manufacturer's instructions.
- Immediately replace any hospital bed mattress cover with visible signs of stains, damage or wear to reduce the risk of infection to patients.

Maintain

- Clean and disinfect undamaged hospital bed mattress covers according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- DO NOT stick needles into a hospital bed mattress through the mattress cover.