



Are your “clean” hotel rooms making your guests sick?

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The comfort of white sheets and fluffy pillows will be forgotten quickly by your guests if they fall sick because of rooms that on the surface are appealing but are not cleaned properly. Are you putting guests at risk because the cleaning protocols at your organization are not up to date with current health issues?

Hotels around the world are welcoming guests who may be slightly or highly susceptible to illness because of age, disability, allergies, or as a result of traveling for medical, dental, or healthcare treatments. Several studiesⁱ have revealed that the bacterial levels of hotel rooms are frighteningly high, posing threats to the health of the guests. With more vulnerable people traveling and exposure to bacteria at high levels, the possibility of causing illness due to inadequately cleaned rooms is on the rise.

It is no surprise that the most contaminated areas in guest rooms and public areas in hotels are the bathrooms posing a risk to guests and staff. For example, the global rates of the infection from the bacteria *Clostridium difficile* or *C diff* as it is commonly known are at epidemic proportions.ⁱⁱ The most common result is diarrhea but for individuals who are immunocompromised such as cancer patients, the person could die. *C diff* is contained in feces.

The bacteria can be present on toilets, bathtubs, showers, sinks, - virtually any surface in the bathroom. Improper cleaning can transfer the bacteria from one surface to another, such as from bathroom counters to drinking glasses or tooth brushes.



Once *C diff* is present, it is easily transferred and hard to get rid of. It is resistant to many types of cleaning products except those containing bleach. Since the bacteria can live for 70-90 daysⁱⁱⁱ on surfaces, it is important to use the proper cleaning products past the time when the initial exposure may have occurred.



An additional germ-laden item in every hotel room is the television remote control. Bacteria love to make themselves comfortable on the remote and wait for the next set of fingers to arrive. *Key pads including those on room safes* are also places where germs reside. It is easy to transfer illness producing germs and bacteria to or from one part of the room to another. What is the protocol at your hotel for cleaning remote controls and key pads?^{iv}

Another innocent looking amenity found in most hotels is the ice machine. The insides of ice machines are rarely cleaned and the dirt, germs, and bacteria build up over time, waiting to be transferred to unsuspecting guests. A Daily Mail study^v found that ice machines are dirtier than toilet bowls. Monthly cleanings of ice machines according to manufacturing guidelines are a must.

While these challenges are faced by hotels everywhere in the world, those that cater to guests who are receiving medical and dental treatments require special attention when cleaning the rooms in which they stay. Hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices are full of microbes waiting to be shared with other people. Hotels that serve medical travelers should review their cleaning protocols and compare what is required at hospitals to protect the health of their guests and staff.

Is it time to review the cleaning protocols in your hotel? Medical Tourism Training is ready to assist you with a review of those protocols as well as training programs to keep guests healthy, happy, and returning for visits in the future. Maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness provides a safer and better quality of stay for guests.

Contact Medical Tourism Training today to learn more about our Redi4HealthTravelers assessment, training programs, and consulting services designed for hotels, resorts, and spas, - tools to keep your guests and staff healthy and loyal.

ⁱ <https://www.amerisleep.com/blog/dirty-dangerous/> accessed 21 November 2017;
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275048203_Sanitary_Status_and_Incidence_of_Methicillin-Resistant_Staphylococcus_aureus_and_Clostridium_difficile_Within_Canadian_Hotel_Rooms accessed 21 November 2017

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nature.com/articles/nrgastro.2016.25>, accessed 20 November 2017;
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3916678/>, accessed 20 November 2017;
<https://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/580913>, accessed 20 November 2017

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cdifff-support.co.uk/tips/>, accessed 20 November 2017

^{iv} <https://www.travelmath.com/feature/hotel-hygiene-exposed/> accessed 21 November 2017

^v <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2334533/Ice-restaurants-bacteria-water-toilets.html> accessed 21 November 2017