

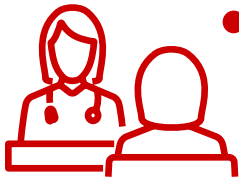
What are patient safety incidents and how can they be prevented?

What is a patient safety incident?



It is an event or circumstance with the actual or potential result of inflicting unnecessary harm to a patient, such as a hospital infection, a medication error or even the patient's death.

They can be divided into:



- Incidents that do not affect the patient
- Incidents that do affect the patient:
 - incidents without apparent harm: do NOT cause any apparent harm to the patient.
 - incidents causing harm or adverse event: they cause harm to the patient, which may be physical, psychological or social in nature.

Why do they occur?

Humans are fallible and **mistakes are to be expected**, even in the best of organisations. Patient safety incidents occur as a result of multiple causes:



Human factors: insufficient staff, fatigued staff...



Process factors: errors in the process flow.



Equipment: lack of maintenance, old/obsolete equipment.



Environmental factors: noise, insufficient space, facility furnishings...



Leadership: lack of patient safety culture in the organisation, and inadequate supervision.



Information management: lack of communication.



When a major **adverse event** occurs, the issue is not *who* committed the mistake, but **why the defences failed**.

How can incidents be minimised?

It is not about changing the human condition but about **changing the conditions** in which professionals work:



- Empower patient safety knowledge through leadership, research, tools and protocols.



- Identify safety problems and learn from mistakes through patient safety incident reporting and management systems.



- Formulation of standards for patient safety improvement by governments, institutions and societies.



- Implement safe practices: staff training, early detection, communication with patients, etc.