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Healthcare professionals, and community nurses in particular, are facing unique challenges as patients are increasingly being managed at home or in community centres. This means that new ways of working are often required to deal with developing and ever-changing threats, such as CA-MRSA.

In order to respond to the changing face of health care and the particular challenges of managing more seriously unwell patients at home, community nurses need to have a working knowledge of common health issues — such as infection risk — that can affect any patient, regardless of their primary diagnosis.

As well as increasing their knowledge base about the changing nature of community health care, it is also important that community nurses develop their knowledge of treatment strategies. In the case of infection prevention and control, this includes educating patients and providing practical guidance on personal hygiene. This can involve using antimicrobial body washes to help reduce the incidence of infection at home, as well as being a means of decontaminating the body before elective surgery, and taking a proactive approach to reduce the risk of developing an infection. **JCN**

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## Key points

- ▶ Infection can have a devastating impact on patients' health and wellbeing and can even be potentially life-threatening.
- ▶ Healthcare professionals have a duty to reduce the risk of infection regardless of cause and/or setting.
- ▶ The rise of antibiogram resistant organisms — so-called 'superbugs' — puts strain on NHS resources as well as negatively affecting patients' quality of life and wellbeing.
- ▶ The increase in the older population means that there are more patients with chronic, long-term conditions, which make them more vulnerable to infection
- ▶ Ensuring that infection prevention and control measures in the community are effective poses a significant challenge.
- ▶ It has been shown that around 20% of all HCAs could be avoided if correct infection prevention and control principles were followed.
- ▶ It is crucial that community nurses educate patients about steps they can take to halt the spread of infection.
- ▶ MRSA is no longer the sole preserve of hospital patients and is more common in patients' own homes or nursing homes.
- ▶ Community nurses need to be vigilant in preventing and controlling such outbreaks, known as community-associated MRSA or CA-MRSA.