

## **Employee Profile**

### **Gail Jackson, RN, CIC, Infection Preventionist**

Gail Jackson wants to know if you've washed your hands lately.

"Hand hygiene is one of the single best ways to prevent the spread of disease and infection, not just in a hospital environment but anywhere you go," she said.

As Newport Hospital's infection preventionist, Gail monitors and educates staff on hand hygiene, and a multitude of practices and policies that help prevent patients from contracting hospital acquired and device related infections such as those related to catheters and central lines. Ongoing collaboration with providers is also invaluable to these and many other infection prevention efforts.

While Gail is the only dedicated infection preventionist at Newport Hospital, she is not alone in her crusade against infections. She works closely with Dr. Francine Touzard-Romo, Chair of the Infection Control Committee at Newport Hospital, and leads an infection prevention champion team that meets monthly to review new information and policies. The champions also play a key role conducting hand hygiene and device maintenance audits throughout the hospital.

Gail rounds throughout the hospital daily, visiting patient units as well as the OR, ED, imaging and the lab. She is one of the first people new hires meet when they start at Newport Hospital, making presentations at new hire orientation and providing extended education to nurses, aides, and student nurses.

She also works very closely with the environmental services team. "As the people responsible for cleaning and disinfecting virtually every area of our hospital, their work is critical to keeping patients, employees and visitors safe," she said. "Our environmental services staff is well educated about their very important role; they take it seriously and they do it very well."

However, the responsibility for infection prevention is not limited to clinical areas. Employees in administration and service jobs also play a role in maintaining a safe environment.

To help from catching anything that is "going around" Gail recommends keeping a clean environment by using disinfectant wipes and practicing hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Eating a healthy diet and being sure to get enough rest also help boost the body's defenses.

Gail earned her nursing degree from Salve Regina College in 1980 and worked mainly in oncology before joining Newport Hospital in 1987 as an IV nurse. She began working part-time in infection prevention in 1994 and took on the role full time in 1997.

"I love coming to work every day," she said. "I am very social by nature and this job gives me the opportunity to get to know people throughout the hospital and form partnerships with frontline staff, providers, and leadership."