
The core list of Never Events

Note: The list of Never Events developed for the first phase of implementation has a focus on acute care. In future phases of implementation the NPSA will work with stakeholders to extend the core list to include incidents from a wider range of care settings.

1. Wrong site surgery

Description: A surgical intervention performed on the wrong site (for example wrong knee, wrong eye, wrong patient, wrong limb, or wrong organ); the incident is detected after the operation and the patient requires further surgery, on the correct site, and/or may have complications following the wrong surgery.

Main care setting: Organisations that provide major, minor and/or day case surgery. Dentistry is to be excluded for the first phase.

2. Retained instrument post-operation

Description: One or more instruments are unintentionally retained following an operative procedure, and an operation or other invasive procedure is needed to remove this, and/or there are complications to the patient arising from its continued presence. This Never Event does not include interventional radiology or cardiology procedures, and the definition of instrument does not include guide wires, screws, swabs or other similar material.

Main care setting: Organisations that provide major, minor and/or day case surgery.

3. Wrong route administration of chemotherapy

Description: Intravenous or other chemotherapy (for example, vincristine) that is correctly prescribed but administered via the wrong route (usually into the intrathecal space).

Main care setting: Acute care.

4. Misplaced naso or orogastric tube not detected prior to use

Description: Naso or orogastric tube placed in the respiratory tract rather than the gastrointestinal tract and not detected prior to commencing feeding or other use.

Main care setting: All.

5. Inpatient suicide using non-collapsible rails

Description: Suicide using curtain or shower rails by an inpatient in an acute mental health setting.

Main care setting: Mental health.

6. Escape from within the secure perimeter of medium or high secure mental health services by patients who are transferred prisoners

Description: A patient who is a transferred prisoner escaping from medium or high secure mental health services where they have been placed for treatment on a Home Office restriction order.

Main care setting: Mental health.

7. In-hospital maternal death from post-partum haemorrhage after elective caesarean section

Description: In-hospital death of a mother as a result of a haemorrhage following elective caesarean section, excluding cases where imaging has identified placenta accreta.

Main care setting: Acute care maternity services.

8. Intravenous administration of mis-selected concentrated potassium chloride

Description: Intravenous administration of mis-selected concentrated potassium chloride.

Main care setting: All.
