

Physician Education Express

NHSN SSI Criteria for PATOS

January 2017



Audience: Inpatient Physicians
Education Level- **YELLOW**
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Attributing SSI to an NHSN procedure when there is evidence of infection at the time of the primary surgery: The Present on Admission (POA) definition does not apply to the SSI protocol.

Infection present at time of surgery (PATOS): PATOS denotes that there is evidence of an infection or abscess at the start of or during the index surgical procedure.

- The use of the ending “itis” in an operative note/report does not necessarily meet PATOS, as it may reflect inflammation which is not infectious in nature (*e.g., diverticulitis, peritonitis, and appendicitis*)
- Identification of an organism **alone** using culture or non-culture based microbiologic testing method or on a pathology report from a surgical specimen **does not = PATOS** (i.e., a positive culture/path report without surgical documentation of infection is not PATOS = yes).
- The following verbiage alone without specific mention of infection does not meet the PATOS definition: *colon perforation, necrosis, gangrene, fecal spillage, nicked bowel during procedure, or a note of inflammation.*
- Fresh trauma resulting in a contaminated case does not necessarily meet PATOS requirement.
- PATOS can be met when an abscess is noted, there is mention of infection in the OR note, purulence or pus is noted, or “feculent peritonitis” is noted, etc. An infected appendix that has ruptured will meet PATOS =Yes, if the patient has a subsequent intraabdominal organ space SSI.

PATOS Examples:

- *Patient admitted with an acute abdomen. Sent to OR for an XLAP where there is a finding of an abscess due to ruptured appendix and an APPY is performed. Patient returns two weeks later and meets criteria for an organ/space IAB SSI.*
 - The PATOS field would be selected as YES on the SSI event since an abscess was noted at the time of surgery in the same level as the subsequent SSI.

Highlights

- PATOS is a YES/NO field on the SSI Event form.
- PATOS does not apply if there is a period of wellness between the time of a preoperative condition and surgery.
- Evidence of infection or abscess must be noted/documented intraoperatively in an operative note or report of surgery.
- Only select PATOS = YES if it applies to the depth of SSI that is being attributed to the procedures

For more information refer to the CDC Surgical Site Infection Event manual at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/pscmanual/9pscscscurrent.pdf>

- *Patient is admitted with a ruptured diverticulum. In the OR note the surgeon documents that there are multiple abscesses in the intraabdominal cavity. Patient returns three weeks later and meets criteria for a superficial SSI.*
 - The PATOS field would be selected as NO since there was no documentation of evidence of infection or abscess of the superficial area at the time of the procedure.
- *During an unplanned cesarean section (CSEC) the surgeon nicks the bowel and there is contamination of the intraabdominal cavity. One week later the patient returns and meets criteria for an organ/space OREP (other reproductive) SSI.*
 - The PATOS field would be selected as NO since there was no documentation of evidence of infection or abscess at the time of the CSEC. The colon nick was a complication but there was no infection present at the time of surgery.
- *Patient undergoes a foot amputation (AMP) due to “dry-gangrene” of the foot from chronic ischemia. There is no evidence of infection at the time of surgery. The word gangrene is not sufficient to qualify for infection. The patient returns two weeks later and has a superficial SSI.*
 - The PATOS field would be selected as NO since there was no documentation of evidence of infection or abscess at the time of AMP-amputation.