



Did You Know?

- **3,400 hospitals** representing **120 countries** have registered as Safe Surgery Saves Lives participating hospitals. See which hospitals have joined this programme by clicking [here](#).
- **21 countries** have mobilized resources to implement the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist at a national level. To see a full list of countries these countries click [here](#).

The Checklist in Action

Since the release of the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist in June 2008 hospitals throughout the world have started to implement the Checklist in their operating theatres. Every hospital has overcome unique challenges in their experience with making the Checklist successful. Here are a few stories that individuals throughout the world have shared with us so far:

- Hospitals throughout the world have used anecdotal stories from surgical team members about the usefulness of the Checklist as a means of Checklist promotion within their hospital. Here is one of those stories:
“While the checklist was foreign to the team in Haiti, it was still a valuable tool for me. I put a boviac line in a patient with a Wilm’s tumor and, before starting, I went through the checklist. I wanted to make sure that I had all necessary medications and asked for 10 units/ml heparin saline to flush the line. They gave me a vial which contained 10,000 units/ml. They do not label syringes in Haiti and therefore if I’d been scrubbed and was handed a syringe with this in it, I would have given the 3 year old a lethal dose. This was all undocumented, but clearly a life saved by using the checklist.” - Surgeon
- University Health Network Hospital (UHN) in Toronto, Canada, one of the pilot sites for the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist Study, measured the impact that the Checklist had on their staff after expanding Checklist use to all of their operating theatres. You can view the video of UHN staff talking about their experiences with the Checklist by clicking [here](#).
- Exemplar St Joseph Hospital in Denver, Colorado integrated the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist with the Joint Commission Universal Protocol. Watch this [video](#) to see how they use their Checklist.
- Great Ormond Street Hospital in London created a video on the value of using the WHO Surgical Checklist in their surgical practice. Watch this inspiring video [here](#).
- The Society for Thoracic Surgeons modified the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist specifically for thoracic surgery. Click [here](#) for more information or to view the checklists that they developed for Adult Cardiac Surgery, General Thoracic Surgery, and Congenital Heart Surgery.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: While there is enthusiasm amongst some clinicians for the Checklist, there are others who do not see the value of this initiative. Can we still use the Checklist?

A: Yes. Implementation should always begin with the most enthusiastic. Go after those who are interested in improvement. The Checklist can be implemented by an individual clinician in cases in which he or she participates, a selected service or operating room suite at a hospital, or on a hospital-wide or even a system-wide basis. Focus energy on those areas and individuals who are receptive to the idea at first. As they become accustomed to the Checklist and its benefits, they will help it spread to their peers.

Q: Our surgical teams don’t want to use the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist unless they can change a few of the elements. Is it okay to make changes to the Checklist?

A: Yes, the Checklist was not intended to be comprehensive, and we encourage modifications for local use. We understand that the Checklist, while intended to be universally applicable, is not always a perfect fit for all institutions. Modifications can be made to include items that are deemed essential. However, please avoid making the Checklist too comprehensive. The more items added to it, the more difficult it will be to successfully implement. Please refer to the *Guidelines for Making Modifications to the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist* on our websites.

To Our Readers

Numerous colleagues implementing the Checklist have written to us asking what the best way to measure the effect of the Checklist is in their hospital. We would like to reach out to you, our colleagues implementing the Checklist on the ground, to better understand what efforts you have already undertaken in this area, *How do you measure the effect of the Checklist at your hospital?* We would love to share your tips with other Checklist users.

Please send your responses to safesurgery@hsph.harvard.edu. If you have any questions or comments about the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist or this newsletter, please write to us. We would love to hear about your experiences with the Checklist and include some of them in the next newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

www.who.int/safesurgery or www.safesurg.org