

# Understanding WakeMed's Leapfrog Patient Safety Grades



The health and safety of the patients we serve, and their families, is of the utmost importance to us. We recognize that the recent 'C' grades from The Leapfrog Group have caused concern for many patients and we

hope this information will help ease any worries you may have about the care we provide.

**Should I be concerned about my safety?** No. WakeMed provides excellent care while taking care of some of the most critically ill and injured patients in our community. We are steadfast in our dedication to providing high-quality, safe care, but, as with anything, there is always opportunity for improvement. You can rest assured that your safety is our utmost priority.

Leapfrog is just one measure of safety and quality – and there are many others where WakeMed does very well. For a list of recent recognition WakeMed has received, visit [www.wakemed.org/about-us-awards-accolades](http://www.wakemed.org/about-us-awards-accolades).

**Why did WakeMed receive C's; what do they mean?** We know the recent C grades from The Leapfrog Group indicate room for improvement. These grades are based on numerous factors and metrics, and WakeMed does exceptionally well in many of them. It is important to note is that the data used to calculate these most recent safety grades is from 2016 through 2018, depending on the measure. Therefore, these scores do not accurately reflect the quality of care we currently deliver.

Since these grades were released, we have heard concern related to two primary areas: infections and surgical complications. We would like to provide some additional information about these areas, which is not intended to downplay the seriousness of these issues, but to provide perspective for our patients.

**Infections** The Leapfrog Group places tremendous weight on infections, which are a concern for hospitals across the country. This is an area where WakeMed has made significant improvements in the past year and it is important to understand that these infections are less common than many may perceive. In full transparency, here are the numbers of infections for the reporting period used for these grades:

Infection Name	What is it?	Raleigh Campus Incidences	Cary Hospital Incidences
Central line associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI)	CLABSI is an infection in the bloodstream that patients can develop if they have a central line placed. Central lines are tubes placed in a large vein to provide fluids, blood or medications.	34	3
Catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI)	CAUTIs are one of the most common infections a person can contract in the hospital. They are caused by catheters.	46	7
Clostridium difficile ( <i>C. diff.</i> )	<i>C. diff.</i> is a type of bacteria that causes inflammation of the colon. Infections are often related to antibiotic use. <i>C. diff.</i> infections can cause severe diarrhea, fever, appetite loss, nausea, and abdominal pain.	97	29
Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)	MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics. MRSA infections can be caught in the community and in hospital settings and may cause severe or life-threatening symptoms.	9	2

During this time, WakeMed had over 50,000 inpatient admissions. While even one infection is too many, you can see that these infections impacted a tiny fraction of the patients we serve.



**Surgical Complications** Complications during surgery, such as foreign objects being retained or 'left behind', is understandably an area of concern for anyone preparing for a surgical procedure. Local coverage of these Leapfrog grades has highlighted that this was an area of concern for WakeMed. We can assure you that these kinds of complications are incredibly rare.

During the reporting period for these scores, WakeMed performed more than 25,000 surgeries. Raleigh Campus had one instance of a retained item and Cary Hospital had two, both of which were device related issues and a complication of the surgery itself. None of these events were the result of staff error or careless behavior. Again, our goal is always zero and we have many processes in place to ensure this does not happen.

**Will your scores improve soon?** We have made tremendous strides in several key areas over the past year – specifically related to infection rates. It will take time for this new data to be incorporated into the Leapfrog scores, and during that time The Leapfrog Group is likely to change their benchmarks again. So, while we know we are making great improvements, we cannot say for certain that this progress will translate to a better letter grade next spring.

We continue to meet and exceed nationally established quality-focused criteria that emphasize patient safety and outcomes. Our entire team is committed to building on this good work as we strive to reach even higher for the benefit of the patients and the families we serve.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with your doctor or reach out to us at [info@wakemed.org](mailto:info@wakemed.org).