What is the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade?

Web address: www.hospitalsafetygrade.org

What is it?
The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is a composite score made up of 27 different nationally reported patient safety measures that indicate how well hospitals protect patients from preventable errors, injuries and infections. Twice annually, grades are assigned to U.S. general hospitals using a scoring algorithm to determine each hospital's score as an A, B, C, D or F letter grade.

What is the difference between the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade and the Leapfrog Hospital Survey?
The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is a letter grade assigned to each hospital via many sources based exclusively on safety. The Leapfrog Hospital Survey is a voluntary, hospital-submitted survey that displays a hospital's progress on each measure, and explores both quality and safety.

How many hospitals were graded in Spring 2018?
Approximately 2,500 hospitals were graded in the Spring 2018 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade.

Does a hospital get a better Safety Grade if it reports to the Leapfrog Hospital Survey?
There is absolutely no penalty in the Safety Grade for declining to report to Leapfrog. A hospital may receive either a better or worse grade based on the information that is publicly available.

However, it is highly unfortunate that any hospital declines to participate in the nation's most important survey for hospital transparency. Leapfrog is the only public source of information on many measures, such as infections, medication safety and maternity care – information consumers should be able to access before selecting a hospital.

For hospitals that do not voluntarily report to the Leapfrog Survey, Leapfrog measures are not included in their grading. Instead, secondary data sources – when available – are consulted to give hospitals with missing data as much credit as possible toward their grade.

Which hospitals are included?
The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is applicable for general acute-care hospitals in the United States. The Leapfrog Group is exploring opportunities for including more categories of hospitals in future iterations of the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade.

Excluded from the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade are:
- Critical access hospitals
- Specialty hospitals, such as children's hospitals or cancer hospitals
- Government hospitals, such as VA and military hospitals
- Long-term care facilities, rehab facilities and ambulatory care centers

- Hospitals for which there isn't enough publicly reported data
- Hospitals in U.S. territories such as Guam and Puerto Rico

Why don't I see my hospital?
Not all hospitals have data publicly available on the full list of 27 measures. In these instances, grades are calculated only for the available measures. As per Expert Panel guidance, The Leapfrog Group has minimum data thresholds for hospitals to be able to receive a grade. Hospitals missing more than six of 12 process measures or more than five of 15 outcome measures are not graded.

This means some general hospitals that should be graded are not. Many rural or small hospitals are unable to report as much data to the federal government because of low patient volumes or fewer services. For instance, hospitals without an ICU cannot report on ICU-specific measures.

Additionally, Leapfrog graded fewer hospitals for Spring 2018 than in the past because of an unusual aberration in federal reporting. The data irregularity comes from reporting of Patient Safety Indicators (PSIs), measures issued by CMS, the agency that runs Medicare. The reporting period for the PSIs used in the Spring 2018 Safety Grades was 15 months instead of the usual 24 months due to this change from CMS, which resulted in hundreds of hospitals not meeting the minimum sample size for one or more PSIs. PSIs are a set of measures providing information on potential hospital complications and adverse events related to medical or surgical inpatient hospital care.

What are you measuring in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade?
The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assesses hospitals strictly on patient safety: i.e., inpatient injuries, infections, and medical and medication errors.

Under the guidance of an Expert Panel, The Leapfrog Group identified 27 measures of patient safety data publicly reported at the national level that they deemed the most significant and reliable of all available measures. This includes measures reported by the federal government via the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, measures reported on the annual Leapfrog Hospital Survey and data from the American Hospital Association's annual survey.

The final 27 measures calculated in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade cover:

- Five infections, including central line-associated bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, surgical site infections for colon surgeries, MRSA and C.diff
- Hospital-wide safety problems, including falls and trauma, and very severe pressure ulcers
- Preventable complications from surgery, such as foreign objects retained in the body, postoperative hazards, and accidental punctures or lacerations

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade also credits hospitals for having the procedures and protocols known to prevent infections, errors and accidents, such as:

- Strong nursing leadership and engagement
- Computerized physician order entry systems to prevent medication errors
- Hand hygiene policies
- Adherence to medical protocols that prevent complications
- The right staffing in the ICU
- Patient experience (HCAHP) measures that have a direct correlation with patient safety outcomes

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade does NOT measure:
- Issues commonly considered quality measures, such as mortality rates for certain procedures
- Measures of hospital quality, such as ratings by specialty or procedure
- Readmission rates

A full list of the measures and their respective weights is available on HospitalSafetyGrade.org.

How is the data assessed?
The scoring algorithm was developed by an Expert Panel of patient safety experts from across the country. The panel carefully considers the evidence base and opportunity for impact behind each of the 27 measures, and weights the importance of each of the measures based in part on the strength of that evidence. The Expert Panel regularly reconvenes to reevaluate the merits of each measure. Leapfrog's transparent [methodology](#) involves computing data for these 27 measures through a scoring algorithm and then assigning each hospital an A, B, C, D or F letter grade.

Where does the data come from?
The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade primarily consists of measures collected and publicly reported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and also includes some measures from the Leapfrog Hospital Survey for hospitals that report to Leapfrog. If a hospital does not submit a Leapfrog Hospital Survey, Leapfrog uses data from the American Hospital Association's annual survey and IT supplement instead. Hospitals are not penalized for not reporting to Leapfrog.