

3M Responds to Latest Augustine Falsehoods; Science Reaffirms that 3M™ Bair Hugger™ System is Safe

You may have seen an email from Scott Augustine, Augustine Temperature Management, who has teamed up with plaintiffs' lawyers to disparage 3M with false and misleading statements about the 3M™ Bair Hugger™ warming system, in an attempt to increase sales of his competitive product.

Know the truth:

- Augustine's latest email blast, of June 2017, misrepresents statements currently under review by the courts. 3M is vigorously defending the Bair Hugger system in this litigation and we are confident that 3M and the science behind forced-air warming will prevail.
- Every lawsuit filed to date against 3M relies on studies supported by Augustine, and every one of the Augustine-promoted studies acknowledges that there is no proof the Bair Hugger system causes infections.
- Contrary to Augustine's claims, the CDC has never issued a recommendation on forced-air warming – let alone anything negative or against it.

Four new articles reaffirm the efficacy of forced-air warming:

Scientific papers published this year further strengthen the safety and efficacy of forced-air warming, while bolstering 3M's position that there is no merit to the claims of plaintiffs' lawyers. Here is a synopsis of the most recent, scientific papers:

- *Airborne bacterial contamination during orthopedic surgery: A randomized controlled pilot trial.* This study measured bacterial counts in six locations in the operating room, with a group of 80 different patients. The study found that **“it was not possible to detect any higher bacterial counts on any plate in the forced-air warming group (the Bair Hugger system) versus the resistive warming group (the HotDog blanket).”** Results of this well-designed study were published in the *Journal of Clinical Anesthesia* in February 2017.
- *Prevention of Periprosthetic Joint Infection: New Guidelines.* This paper, published in the *The Bone & Joint Journal in March 2017*, discusses new guidelines from the World Health Organization and Center for Disease Control in preventing infections in total knee and hip replacement surgeries. On the issue of patient warming, the study notes: **“Concerns regarding the use of air warming and the potential for contamination have been raised by a few authors although this has not been proven ... The guidelines agree on the importance of maintaining normothermia of the patient during surgery.”**
- *Forced-Air warmers and Surgical Site Infections in Patients Undergoing Knee or Hip Arthroplasty.* This paper, published in January 2017 in the *Annual Review of Nursing Research*, reviewed the existing science. Its conclusion: **“Current evidence does not support forced-air warmers causing surgical site infections in patients undergoing total knee or hip arthroplasty.”** The paper called for more study of the alleged issues.
- *Normothermia in Arthroplasty.* This comprehensive review article was accepted for publication in January 2017 by the *Journal of Arthroplasty*. Its finding: **“Based on the available evidence present at this point, there is no scientific proof that the use of forced-air warming leads to an increase in surgical site infections regardless of the type of surgical procedure and the type of operating room.”**

Important facts to remember:

- The Bair Hugger system is a safe and effective method of keeping patients warm before, during and after surgery.
- A large number of studies continue to recommend patient warming, which has been shown to provide valuable benefits to surgical patients, including reducing the risk of surgical site infections, reduced mortality, fewer post-operative heart attacks, reduced blood loss and faster recovery times. A compendium of studies can be found [here](#).
- While 3M is sympathetic to patients who experience surgical site infections, there is no proof – nor any indication – that the Bair Hugger warming system has caused an infection. It has been safely used more than 200 million times in the past 30 years and continues to be used thousands of times each day.
- 3M continues to stand behind our products, patients and customers.