

5 reasons why plastics are essential to patient and health worker safety



1. Disposable (and recyclable) plastics-based medical devices reduce cross contamination

With the introduction of single-use, plastics-based devices at a large scale in the 1960s it was possible to eliminate most cross-contamination between patients and also make hospitals safer for healthcare workers.

However, disposable does not mean unrecyclable. The majority of single-use medical devices are made from PVC, a safe, versatile and affordable material that can be easily recycled – and that's being done in several parts of the world.



2. Plastics are robust and help make hospitals safer for patients and health workers

In the past, containers for medicines, blood and other fluids were made of glass. When robust plastic-based containers were introduced in the 1950s, it meant a great leap for patient safety, as well as the safety of healthcare workers.



3. Hygienic vinyl-based hospital interiors help against hospital-acquired infections

Each year more than 4 million patients in the EU contract infections from hospital exposures and 37,000 unnecessary deaths result due to such infections. Vinyl flooring, ceiling and wall coverings are widespread in hospitals and help to create safe environments, thanks to the polymer's unique hygienic properties.



4. Plastics are extremely versatile and have enabled endless innovation

Due to plastics' extreme versatility, designers have endless options to create life-saving medical products for diagnostics, treatment and care.



5. Affordable plastics have expanded access to quality healthcare

Cost is a barrier to safe, quality healthcare. As plastics in general, and PVC in particular, are affordable and extremely versatile, they have played a huge role in allowing more and more people around the world access to quality healthcare.