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## Better healthcare buildings with Gerflor's flooring solutions

**Dedicated flooring solutions are helping to make healthcare environments healthier places says Navjot Dhillon, Marketing Manager, Gerflor.**

Flooring for healthcare must tick many boxes in order to provide effective safety and infection control, cost-effective maintenance, lasting good looks and lower environmental impact. It must also meet the demands of different healthcare installations from hospitals to primary care centres and care homes.

Understandably, healthcare design is increasingly about health and prevention in a broader sense, and the responsibility of creating better, sustainable buildings that are healthy places for staff, patients and visitors. Specifiers rightly expect healthcare floorings to comply with international safety standards as benchmarks, leaving them to focus on designing healthcare buildings of the future.

However, infection control remains a crucial issue, given that it is reported that one in 16 people treated by the NHS picks up an infection. These nosocomial infections - infections acquired in hospital and other healthcare facilities - continue to be under the microscope in terms of combating transmission. If bacteria are present on the ground, it is vital that building materials do not cause them to proliferate. Floorings that meet ultra clean requirements therefore play a vital role in preventing the transmission of microorganisms.

French standard NF S90 -351 is the reference standard that defines the requirement for controlling airborne contamination in controlled environment areas in healthcare facilities. It proposes four risk class reference standards determined by type of activity, with 4 being 'very high risk'. Depending on the risks, the ISO standard 14644-1 defines expected performance levels to be met; for particulate cleanliness in very high-risk areas this is ISO 4 and ISO 5. The standard also defines other values like bacteriological cleanliness and is an important benchmark for specifiers.

Pioneering surface treatments using advanced technology are taking protection control and hygiene to another level. Incorporated into new, seamless solutions with superior infection resistance, they include floorings, wallcoverings, handrails and corner systems, providing an integrated approach to contamination control in clinical environments.

With products for different levels of risk, those meeting and exceeding ISO 4 and ISO 5 requirements are developed for the highest risk areas like acute hospitalisation units and operating theatres. Suitable products under 24hr test conditions have shown no proliferation of the most common hospital bacteria in 99% of cases.

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The cleanability of flooring is also of fundamental importance in healthcare. Cleanability is assessed by determining the quality of residual contamination present on the surface of the covering after set maintenance procedures. Products that retain their appearance with best practice cleaning procedures and less maintenance, drive down costs and step up environmentally.

For example, some floorings with fungistatic and bacteriostatic treatments allow stains commonly found in hospitals to be safely and hygienically removed with minimum water and detergent. Scuff resistant surface treatments that require no polishing or waxing also lower maintenance costs and the resulting environmental impact. In addition, whole life cycle implications are factors in the move towards 'greener' solutions.

Clearly healthcare flooring needs to be durable, functional and sustainable, however cutting-edge design and contemporary colour choices guarantee floorings look great too. For example, wood designs and decorative effects help create harmonious, uplifting interior atmospheres, aiding recovery and well-being.

Gerflor has a wide range of flooring solutions perfect for the demanding and stringent requirements of a healthcare facility and the necessary expertise to assist specifiers with their refurbishment and new build projects. A wide portfolio of designs and colours are available along with bespoke collections that provide outstanding technical performance including an unrivalled level of chemical and stain resistance as well cushioned flooring for enhancing the well-being of staff, patients and visitors.

Learn more about Gerflor healthcare solutions, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01926 622 600, emailing [contractuk@gerflor.com](mailto:contractuk@gerflor.com), or visiting [gerflor.co.uk](http://gerflor.co.uk) for the latest innovations.

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