

**SOFT, POROUS FABRICS**  
**IN THE PATIENT "HOT ZONE"**

OR Sustainability Expert

**FIRST**  
**CASE**



**KAREN GOELST**  
CEO & FOUNDER OF KLEENEDGE

*First Case OR Sustainability Expert™:*

## **Soft, Porous Fabrics in the Patient "Hot Zone"**

*Karen Goelst | CEO & Founder of KleenEdge*

Contaminated surfaces in the surgical patient environment can be implicated in the development and transmission of infection. Both soft and hard surfaces comprise the "patient hot zone" defined as the patient bed and 36" surrounding the bed.

Soft surfaces are often more difficult to clean than hard surfaces and have been shown to be involved in development and transmission of infection. The CDC Environmental Services (EVS) guideline even goes so far to recommend avoiding use of upholstered furniture in patient care areas. For all practical purposes, cloth privacy curtains should be avoided in the patient hot zone. Germs can survive on soft surfaces such as fabrics, and certainly there is evidence that they can be transferred from fabric to hand or fabric to fabric. But transfer was most successful when fabric or hands were wet.

Studies have shown germs can live and survive on soft surfaces such as privacy curtains in the patient hot zone. These surfaces are a true concern for infection prevention because the leading edge of the curtain is continuously contaminated and becomes a potential reservoir for transmission.

An alternate solution to fabric privacy curtains in the patient hot zone is to deploy cost-saving disposable curtains that can be exchanged efficiently without a ladder and that are made out of a recyclable non-porous material similar to CSR wrap, face masks, and isolation gowns.

Have more questions for this expert? Contact Karen at [kgoelst@KleenEdge.com](mailto:kgoelst@KleenEdge.com)

*OR Sustainability Expert Series™ Biography:*

# Karen Goelst

## Founder & CEO



With a 20-year background in architectural specialties and textiles, Karen Goelst became passionate about solving the issues surrounding privacy curtains following her 15-year-old son's hospital stay with MRSA.

Staying at his bedside she noticed everybody touched the fabric privacy curtain, but the label showed that it hadn't been exchanged for 14 months. Thankfully her son recovered, but this realization started her journey in trying to understand why curtains weren't getting exchanged, when other touchpoints in the room were thoroughly disinfected. Karen founded KleenEdge to ensure this infection risk did not impact other families.

KleenEdge builds its privacy curtain solutions on 4 pillars:

- Protocol software that monitors curtain exchange compliance
- Sustainable cost-saving recyclable curtains
- No-ladder solutions to promote lean workflows and safety
- Patient and staff safety

Launched in 2018, the company received early accolades for its innovative Protocol Compliance Software, receiving AHE's Product Innovation Award, as well as getting patents for the QuickLoad and TeleTrack "no ladder" curtain exchange cubicle track solutions. KleenEdge's solutions have helped many healthcare facilities dramatically reduce operational costs, while having peace of mind knowing that their curtain exchanges are compliant and deliver the highest standard of care for their patient's safety.



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