

Infection Prevention and Control - general advice for patients and visitors

The hospital has an infection prevention and control team who work hard with staff to reduce, monitor and help prevent the spread of infections. The team regularly update and train staff about the ways of reducing the spread of MRSA and other bacteria as it is important to prevent infections when patients are in hospital.

Hand Hygiene

Patients and Visitors can help matters greatly by following this advice

- Patients and visitors should use the specially provided hand gels when entering and leaving the ward. The gel dispensers are located on the wall at the entrance to each ward and are attached to each patient's locker.

Staff routinely wash their hands with soap and water, or use a hygienic hand rub, before caring for a patient. They will not be offended if you ask them if they have cleaned their hands before attending to your needs.

Cleanliness

The Trust has a monitoring system in place to ensure high levels of cleanliness. If you have any concerns about the ward environment or cleanliness please speak to the ward manager or department manager for that area. The Trust will value all feedback.

In order to reduce clutter and assist ward staff in maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness please bring in essential items only and try to keep patients' belongings in the designated locker.

Food

Non-perishable items of food can be brought in for patients. Other food must be prepared following good food hygiene principles. It must be stored correctly in transit to the hospital and consumed immediately.

Please do not go into the ward kitchens.

Visitors what can you do?

1. Make sure you are in good health before visiting

- If you have had diarrhoea and or vomiting, you should be symptom free for at least 48hours before you visit.

- If you have a heavy cold, flu like symptoms or a chest infection, stay away until the symptoms go away. This is **particularly** important if you are visiting the Critical Care unit.
- Some infectious conditions for example chicken pox, shingles and mumps may be a problem to patients, especially those with a vulnerable immune system. If you have been in contact with somebody who has a communicable infection it may best if you do not visit other patients. If you are unsure or you need advice please contact the ward staff or Infection Prevention nurse before you visit.
- If you have any open wounds, a clean, waterproof dressing should be used to cover them.

2. Use the alcohol gel

In most instances, **the most effective** way to protect patients and yourselves is to use the alcohol gel provided when entering and leaving the ward. However in the case of Clostridium Difficile or if there is viral diarrhoea and vomiting on the ward we would ask you to wash your hands. Make sure you cover all surfaces of your hands. If you are visiting more than one patient perform hand hygiene between.

Feel free to remind others if they appear to have forgotten

3. Check with staff before entering an isolation room or area

If a patient is being barrier nursed in a single room or in a bay, please discuss with staff before entering. Always wash your hands before leaving.

4. Stick to the visiting rules

Please stick to visiting times and the number of visitors allowed (speak to the nursing staff if there are specific requests around visiting). Visitors should refrain from sitting on patients beds as this may add to the risk of cross infection as well as damaging the mattress.