

## Infection Prevention and Control Information when visiting adults in hospital

### Together we can fight infection

Hospital infections can be introduced and spread by patients and visitors. This leaflet explains how you can help staff to reduce them and provide a clean and safe environment in which to care for patients.

Cleaning your hands before and after you visit reduces cross infection.

### Before you Visit

#### Make sure you are in good health before visiting

Please do not visit if you have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting, you should be symptom free for at least 48 hours before your visit.

If you have a cold, flu or a chest infection, do not visit. This is particularly important if you are visiting oncology, haematology or intensive care units.

If you have any open wounds, please cover them with a clean, waterproof dressing for your protection.

#### Have you had contact with people with infections?

Some infectious conditions, for example chicken pox, shingles and mumps may be a problem to patients, especially babies, children and adults with a vulnerable immune system.

If you have been in contact with somebody who has an infection do not visit other patients. If unsure, please contact the ward staff or the Infection prevention and control team before you visit

Always go to the reception/nurses station to say that you are visiting, staff can then advise if you need to take any extra action relating to infection risks.

### Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective way of stopping infections passing from person to person. In most instances the best way to protect patients and yourself is to use the alcohol gel provided when entering and leaving the ward.

If you are assisting with personal care you will need to wash your hands before and after.

#### How to wash your hands

You should wet your hands first and then apply soap. Rub hands together thoroughly, paying particular attention to the backs of the hands, go up to the wrist area, in between fingers, finger nail beds and thumbs - these areas are commonly missed. Make sure you rinse and dry your hands thoroughly.

#### Patients being nursed in isolation

If a patient is being nursed with special precautions in a single room or in a bay, please check with staff before entering. The aim is to prevent the transfer of infection from the patient to other patients, staff and visitors and vice versa. Always perform hand hygiene on entering and leaving.

## General advice to visitors

- In order to assist ward staff in maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness only bring in essential items and try to keep patients' personal belongings in the designated locker.
- Co-operate with visiting times and the numbers of visitors allowed
- Please do not sit or lie on patients' beds, use the chairs provided. Do not use the patient toilets – there are designated visitor toilets by the lifts.
- Never touch patients' wounds, drips, tubes etc. If you do so accidentally, please wash your hands immediately.
- If you are visiting more than one patient, perform hand hygiene in between them. You should visit non-infectious patients first.
- Pre-packaged items of food that do not require refrigeration 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. If this cannot be guaranteed, the infection prevention and control team does not recommend that such food be given to patients.
- Please do not go into the ward kitchens unless you have been given specific permission from the ward staff
- Children should not crawl on the floors and must be supervised at all times.
- Talk to the ward staff if you have any concerns about the cleanliness of the environment.
- Please check with ward matron that flowers are permitted. Flowers should be presented in Oasis please.
- Discuss with the nurse caring for your loved one, how you can help when visiting – it may be that you can promote eating and drinking and good hygiene.

## Further Information

Adapted from Royal College of Nursing, Information for patients – MRSA and other healthcare associated infections – how you can stop the spread of infection and stay well (April 2005).

For further information please contact the Infection, Prevention and Control Team at Conquest Hospital – Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 773305 or Eastbourne DGH – Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 735407 between 08.00hrs to 1800hrs - Monday to Friday. Answerphone service available.

## Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:  
Adapted from Royal College of Nursing, Information for patients – MRSA and other healthcare associated infections

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Responsible clinician/author: Lisa Redmond Head of Infection Prevention and Control

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