

How is infection spread?

Infection can easily be spread in situations where people are together in one place. This is especially true of hospitals.

The single most important way to prevent the spread of infection is good hand hygiene. We demand high standards of hand hygiene from all staff. If you have any concerns, please speak to the nursing staff.

How can you help?

On admission, you can help us to reduce the risk of infection by telling your medical team if you have:

- been an inpatient in another hospital in the last 12 months
- been an inpatient in a hospital abroad in the last 12 months
- previously had *MRSA*
- previously had *Clostridium difficile*
- ever been told you carry resistant organisms e.g. Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)
- had any recent episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea

During your stay in hospital:

- **Always wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet.**
- If you use a commode, ask the nurse for facilities to wash your hands, even if this is only a wet wipe.
- If you are confined to your bed, having moist hand-wipes with you will ensure you always have a means of cleaning your hands, especially before eating or drinking.
- Personal hygiene is very important when you are in hospital. It is necessary to bring in with you all your personal toiletries including soap, single use wash cloths and a towel. Men should bring their own razor for shaving (surgical patients please refer to the additional information you have been given).

- Avoid touching any wounds, drips, catheters or other tubes if you have them. If for any reason you need to touch them, clean your hands before and after.
- If you have a cannula (line or drip) placed in your vein, this will be checked regularly by a nurse. If you experience any of the following inform your nurse immediately:
 - pain
 - swelling or redness around the site
 - the area feels hot to touch,
 - you feel hot, cold, shivery,
 - if the dressing becomes wet or falls off
- Swabs or samples may be taken routinely to look for bacteria such as *Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), *Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci* (VRE) or Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE). This is quite usual and will help to protect both you and others from the spread of infection. The nurse on the ward will inform you of the results from these tests.
- Your bed area will be cleaned regularly. Please try to keep it free from clutter to enable the cleaning staff to clean your locker and bed-table. If you or your visitors notice something that has been overlooked during cleaning, please tell the nursing staff.
- If you visit the bathroom or toilet and you feel it needs additional attention, report this immediately to the nurse in charge of the ward. In the meantime, use another toilet.
- If you have any concerns about hygiene whilst in hospital, please speak to the nurse in charge, matron or contact the infection prevention team.

How can visitors help?

- **Only two visitors at each bedside at any one time.** Chairs are provided and we ask that they are replaced in the designated area at the end of visiting. Please do not allow your visitors to sit on your bed.
- If children wish to visit, please discuss with the nurse in charge.

- It is important that your visitors wash their hands or use the alcohol based gel before entering and leaving the ward. A poster showing the most effective technique is placed next to each dispenser. We ask visitors to cover any open wounds such as cuts when visiting the hospital.
- Please ensure that your visitors do not come into hospital if they have recently had diarrhoea, vomiting, colds, flu or infections such as chickenpox. If in doubt, discuss with the nurse in charge.

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Further information can be found at: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/>
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Helping us to prevent infections

Information for patients