



## **Infection Prevention & Control**

# **Infection Prevention and Control Information for Visitors**

### **Help us fight infection**

**Please wash your hands – it can save lives!**

### **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.

By following the points in this leaflet, you can help us to prevent vulnerable individuals picking up infection and also the spread of infections.

All staff receive infection control training. This includes practical sessions on hand washing. Staff must either wash their hands or use alcohol gel between care of every patient. Sometimes they get busy, so it is OK to remind staff to wash or gel their hands.

The Trust has invested money in housekeeping services to meet the National Standards for cleanliness.

Staff comply with a dress code. Clinical staff have adopted a “bare below the elbows” approach. Doctors may well do ward rounds in short sleeved shirts and not wear wristwatches to enable them to wash their hands properly.

### **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, eg 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.

## **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 or leaving the ward or if assisting with the care of a patient. However, in the case of infective diarrhoea, including viral diarrhoea and vomiting, or if you have been dealing with bodily fluids, we would ask you to wash your hands. Make sure you wash all surfaces of your hands.

Feel free to remind others if they appear to have forgotten.

## **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, fingernail beds and thumbs - these areas are commonly missed. Make sure you 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. 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
- 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 this be given to patients
- Please do not go into the ward kitchens unless you have been given specific permission from ward staff

- Children should not crawl on the floors and must be supervised at all times
- Flowers are not allowed at the hospital as they inhibit the cleaning processes
- Talk to the ward staff if you have any concerns about the cleanliness of the environment.

## Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Nurse Specialist: 01305 254269/5640

Infection Prevention and Control Team: 01305 253279  
Between 0700hrs-1700hrs Monday-Friday. Answerphone service available.

## About this leaflet:

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Written: February 2016  
*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).*

Updated & Approved: February 2023

Review Date: February 2026

Edition: v2

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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