

Infection Prevention and Control

Isolation and barrier nursing

Patients may need to be nursed in “isolation” or “barrier nursed”. This leaflet has been produced to help everyone understand what this means and to answer any questions.

Why do we need to Isolate/barrier nurse?

- To reduce the risk of spreading certain infections or antibiotic resistant germs to other patients and staff.
- To protect patients from infection if they have a weak immune system due to disease or taking certain drugs.

What is isolation/barrier nursing?

- **Isolation nursing** is carried out by placing the patient in a single room or side room.
- **Barrier nursing** – this occurs when a patient(s) is kept in a bay and extra precautions are implemented to prevent spread of the germ.

It may be necessary occasionally to move a patient to another ward. This may arise either because there are no single rooms available on their own ward or in order to ensure they receive specialist care. The Infection Prevention and Control team are available to assist the ward nurses to assess where patients will be nursed.

The nursing care that you receive will be the same whether you are in a side room or on the main ward.

Protective Clothing

- Staff will wear protective clothing for example gloves, apron and mask (if required) in order to reduce the risk of passing the infection / germ to other patients.
- The type of clothing that staff wear will depend upon what type of care they are carrying out and how the infection is spread.
- If the infection is likely to be spread by breathing in the germs that are causing the infection then staff will wear masks.
- It is very unlikely that visitors will need to wear any protective clothing such as apron or gloves. If they do then nursing staff will advise.

Visitors

Visitors must check with the nurse in charge before entering the room. Isolation rooms can be identified by a red hand sign which will be placed on the door. In general it is not advisable for babies or visitors who are sick to visit as they are at risk of picking up or passing on an infection themselves.

Visitors are required to clean their hands when entering and leaving the isolation room or



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bay by using either the alcohol gel or soap and water provided. The method used will depend upon why the patient is in isolation. Please check with the nurse whether alcohol gel or soap and water is required.

It is important that visitors do not sit on the bed as this can also transfer germs.

Can I leave my bed area or room?

Patients in isolation should not wander around the ward area as this may pass on the germ to other patients. However, this does depend upon what infection they have and how the germs are passed on. The Infection Prevention and Control Team are available for advice.

Patients will be asked to keep the door to the isolation room closed. For any concerns please discuss this with the nursing staff.

Treatment that is needed in other departments will be received in most cases, unless deemed not urgent when it will be arranged for a later date.

Staff in any other department visited will be informed about the infection so that they can take relevant precautions.

When is isolation/ barrier nursing stopped?

This will depend upon the reason for isolation. It can be anything from a few days to the whole hospital stay.

Any concerns?

Please speak to the nurses on the ward.

It may be useful to write down any questions in the space below.

The Infection Prevention and Control Team are available to discuss any issues relating to isolation or barrier nursing please ask the ward nurse. The Infection Prevention and Control Nurses are available, Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

Telephone 024 7696 4791

Other leaflets produced by the Infection Prevention and Control Team include:

- MRSA
- ESBL
- Clostridium difficile

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 4791 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

Document History

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