

Infection Prevention and Control

Patient's clothing bags (PCB)

You may have clothing/ nightwear which requires laundering at home during your admission. The patient clothing bag (PCB) is a special sealed bag which lets you safely transport any soiled or infected laundry for washing at home.

The PCB is put into a washing machine unopened. It quickly opens in the water. This means you don't need to touch the dirty laundry. This stops nasty smells and reduces the chance of infecting other people.

How does it open?

The PCB has a water-soluble seam and is sealed with a water-soluble tape. This lets the PCB open in the washing machine - the laundry comes out, and the remains of the bag are washed with the clothing.

How do I use the clothing bag?

- Staff will put the laundry in the PCB for you.
- Staff will close and seal the PCB with a special water-soluble tie tape.
- To carry it home, put the PCB in another ordinary bag to keep it safe from damage and getting wet.
- At home, take the PCB out of the carry bag. Put it in a washing machine unopened without any other washing.
- The PCB is suitable for washing items in both hot and cold washes.
- In the first 30 seconds of washing, the tie and a water-soluble seam dissolve in the water. This opens the PCB, so the laundry escapes into the water.



Patient Information

- The laundry and the PCB carries on washing in the normal way, cleaning and disinfecting the laundry.
- Once the wash ends, throw away the remains of the PCB. The clean and washed laundry is safe to handle.

Frequently asked questions

Do the dissolved seam and tape harm the environment?

No. The dissolved tape is easily broken down by bacteria into harmless substances.

Why must the PCB be left unknotted?

A knot is a solid lump of material and water cannot reach the centre of the knot to dissolve it. Always use the tape provided.

Why not use a PCB that dissolves fully?

Fully soluble laundry bags do exist. But they do not dissolve at the temperatures used in home washing machines. Industrial machines use hotter water.

Can I tumble dry the empty PCB?

No. The tumble dryer would melt the plastic.

Never put the PCB with the laundry into the dryer.

What if I use a washer/dryer?

If you use a combined washer dryer, do the wash as two separate jobs.

At first, set it to wash only.

After the wash cycle has finished, remove the PCB, and then tumble dry as needed.

If you have any further questions about using the patient clothing bag (PCB), please ask the nursing staff who will help you.

Why don't NHS hospitals wash patients' personal clothing?

- The hospital would need a special unit to wash patients' clothing. Hospital linen is washed at high temperatures and with detergents that may damage personal items.
- Because of the number of patients within the hospitals and no on-site facility to launder patient's clothing, it is extremely difficult to trace individual items of clothing.
- Detergents used for the hospital linen may not be compatible with materials used for personal clothing.

If you have any further queries or concerns, the **Infection Prevention and Control Team** are available to speak to you or your family.

Infection Prevention and Control Team

024 7696 4791, Monday - Friday between 9am and 6pm

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 try to help you.

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