



The Clatterbridge
Cancer Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

Infection Prevention and Control

Infection Control

A guide for patients and visitors



Contents

What is a healthcare associated infection?.....	1
Infection prevention and control precautions	2
What can you do for yourself & others?	3
Who can I speak to if I have further questions?	8
Other sources of information	9



This information is for patients or for families and visitors who would like to know more about infection prevention and control.

This leaflet will answer some of the questions that patients frequently ask about infection prevention and control and will explain ways to prevent infections from spreading.

As you may be aware, many patients in hospital are vulnerable to infection and some may already have an infection. We would like to reassure you that we take infection prevention and control very seriously at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and we have a very low incidence of infection. The Infection Prevention and Control Team are specialist nurses and microbiologists who work together with all hospital staff to try to identify infection risks and ensure patients are cared for in a safe, clean environment.

What is a healthcare associated infection?

You may have heard about healthcare associated infections (HCAI) from the television or newspapers, but the majority of patients who come into hospital complete their treatment successfully, without developing an infection.

There are many different germs able to cause infections in people but the most well-known germs include 'norovirus', 'C.diff' and 'MRSA'.

Norovirus is a virus that is one of the commonest causes of infectious gastroenteritis (sickness and diarrhoea) and sometimes causes outbreaks in hospitals, schools, care homes and even cruise ships and hotels. The symptoms usually only last for a couple of days and there are no lasting effects.

C.diff is short for 'Clostridium difficile', a bacterium that some people have living naturally in their bowel. Sometimes, when people have a course of antibiotics, C.diff can cause diarrhoea.

MRSA stands for meticillin (M) resistant (R) Staphylococcus (S) aureus (A). MRSA is a bacterium (germ) which can live harmlessly on our body, but under some circumstances also has the ability to cause infections.

Infection prevention and control precautions

In order to reduce the risk of infection, standard (infection control) precautions are used for all hospital patients all of the time, as these help to stop germs such as MRSA or C.diff spreading from person to person.

Standard precautions routinely include:

- Staff cleansing their hands between every patient with either hand hygiene rub and/or soap and water



- Staff using plastic aprons and disposable gloves whenever necessary (these may not be necessary all of the time)
- Keeping the hospital environment and equipment clean and tidy
- Special handling of waste or used linen

Standard precautions can seem a bit complicated, but please ask a member of staff if there is something that you see that you don't understand, or if you want more information.

Sometimes, patients with a specific infection may need to be nursed separately from other people and additional infection control precautions may then have to be used.

What can you do for yourself & others?

The following are some tips and information to help you to reduce the risk of infection to yourself and others, working in partnership with the hospital.

Ward hygiene

All wards are cleaned every day and it is important that these areas are kept free from clutter so they can be cleaned thoroughly. Please send any suitcases, unnecessary clothing and personal possessions home to assist the domestic staff to keep the ward dust free. If you find that the bed area or ward is not clean, please tell the nurse in charge.

Always make sure you wear footwear when out of bed. Although the floor is cleaned regularly, there will always be germs on it.

Toilets and sanitary fittings are also cleaned regularly throughout the day. If you find the toilet or bathroom is dirty or would like help cleaning the area, please tell the nurse in charge immediately so that action can be taken.

Flowers

Although flowers do make lovely gifts at home, they take a lot of looking after and take up space in the ward. We try to discourage visitors from bringing in flowers as they are not always practical in hospitals.

Food and drink

Never leave perishable foods in a locker and do not share or accept food from other patients. Fruit and other snacks (biscuits, sweets etc.) should be kept covered, ideally fruit should be eaten on the day. If your relatives are bringing in food for you to eat, it can't be reheated on the ward, so hot food should be delivered in a thermos-type container. We can store commercially prepared cold food in ward refrigerators, but only if it is labelled with your name and the date.

Unless you have been told to restrict the amount of fluids you drink, we would advise you to drink at least 10 cups of non-alcoholic beverage per day (this is approximately 2 litres of fluid). This is because good hydration can help prevent bladder infections (urinary tract Infections).



Visitors

Healthy individuals are not at risk of getting infections just by visiting, but everyone is encouraged to clean their hands before and after visiting. We also advise limiting the number of visitors around the bed to two people and we discourage visitors from sitting on or placing personal property (bags, coats etc.) on hospital beds. There may be times you will be asked to wear an apron and mask.

Visitors must not visit the hospital if they have an infection themselves. If they are in doubt, they should speak to the nurse in charge.

Personal hygiene for patients in hospital

Regular personal hygiene plays an important part in reducing the risk of infection, so it is important to make sure that patients have enough toiletries, including soap, toothbrush, toothpaste and a hair comb or brush. Wet wipes are also useful to keep face and hands fresh, especially for patients unable to get to the bathroom regularly.

Visitors can help by supplying clean clothes and towels. If this is not possible, please let the nurses know as it may sometimes be possible to use hospital linen.

Wounds should be covered and any medical devices (tubes, drips or catheters) must be cared for according to strict standards.

Sometimes, patients are encouraged to help care for their own wounds or medical devices including catheters or breathing aids (such as a nebuliser) but it is important that people are properly trained first. If you are a patient and would like to do this, or would like a member of your family to help care for you, please ask a nurse to help with training.

If a wound dressing is wet, or the wound is leaking through, please tell a member of staff, so that a fresh dressing can be applied as soon as possible. Always tell the nurse or doctor if you are experiencing pain, redness or swelling from any wound or other sites.

Anyone coughing or sneezing should always cover his/her mouth and nose with a tissue and dispose of the used tissue in a waste bin, making sure to clean hands properly afterwards.

Hand hygiene

Any member of healthcare staff is taught the correct procedures to help reduce the risks of an infection occurring and this includes the need to cleanse their hands before and after caring duties. Sometimes, during busy times, staff may forget or not be seen to cleanse their hands appropriately. It is important for you to know that if you think someone has forgotten about hand hygiene, it is OK to remind them and you are encouraged to do this.



There are hand hygiene rubs at the entrance to wards/departments and at the end of each patient's bed. This is to make hand hygiene easier for staff but also for visitors and patients too. Many of our wall mounted hand rub and soap dispensers are automatic and there is no need to touch them. Simply place your cupped hands underneath the dispenser and the correct amount will be dispensed onto your hands. For manual pump dispensers, just dispense one measured amount and use to cleanse your hands

If your hands look clean, please use the hand hygiene rub at the bottom of the bed or from a wall dispenser whenever you want to sanitise your hands. If you are unable to reach the hand rub and would like to use it, please ask a member of staff to help you.

1. Dispense 1-2 applications of hand hygiene rub into a cupped hand
2. Rub your hands together vigorously until they feel dry

Please don't use the hand hygiene rub if you are about to touch your eyes.

If your hands are visibly soiled or if you have diarrhoea, it is important to wash your hands with soap and water. Again, if you are unable to do this for yourself please ask a member of staff to help you.

The best way of making sure you wash your hands effectively is:

1. Wet hands under running water
2. Dispense one dose of soap into a cupped hand
3. Rub thoroughly, without adding more water. Hand wash for 15-30 seconds.
4. Rinse hands under running water
5. Dry hands with a paper towel

Again, if you are unable to do this for yourself, please ask a member of staff to help you.

Who can I speak to if I have further questions?

Please speak to any of the ward staff caring for you.

The Infection Prevention and Control Team also listen confidentially to any comments and complaints so that we can learn from any mistakes and improve still further. You may write to us at the hospital address below or, if you would like to speak to an infection prevention and control nurse, you can contact us directly or your ward nurse can arrange a meeting.

Infection Prevention and Control Nurses

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust

Clatterbridge Road

Bebington, Wirral, CH63 4JY

Telephone 0151 556 5726



Other sources of information

A variety of Infection Prevention and Control information leaflets are available via the ward staff so please ask if you would like one.

Official Websites

Public Health England display information about many different infections. You can access this information using the A-Z function on their website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england.

How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust
Clatterbridge Road, Bebington,
Wirral, CH63 4JY.

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