



Infection Prevention and Control

Inpatient and visitor
information



**Caring, Learning
& Growing Together**

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Our Trust is fully committed to preventing Healthcare Associated Infections and takes Infection Prevention and Control very seriously.

This leaflet aims to answer a number of commonly asked questions about Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).

It explains what an infection is, how they might be spread, and what you should do to prevent this.

This leaflet is not intended to replace the discussion between you and the professional caring for you, but may help you discuss it.

What is the Trust doing to prevent HCAIs?

IPC is the use of safe systems and ways of working that help to prevent or reduce infections within health care settings.

Good standards of IPC are essential to safeguard the health and safety of all patients, members of the public and staff.

Why is infection prevention and control important?

A number of bacteria (germs) can cause serious problems for vulnerable individuals.

It is thought that by using good IPC measures, it is possible to prevent some infections from occurring whilst a patient is in hospital.

What causes infections?

Germs are everywhere. They are transferred on our hands when we touch other people, animals, bodily fluids, contaminated surfaces and food. They can then be passed to other people and on to other surfaces.

Infections are caused by germs entering the body, for example:

- Through a wound or cut
- When we breathe – for example, when we catch a cold
- When we eat – for example, if bacteria is on our fingers
- Through a medical device that is inserted into the body – like a drip into a vein or a catheter into the bladder

An infection that has occurred in hospital is called a Healthcare Associated Infection (HCAI). Two of the most common HCAIs are Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and Clostridioides (*Clostridium*) *difficile* (*C. difficile*).

If you would like more information, please ask a member of staff.

Infections can happen anywhere, but inpatients can be more vulnerable for a number of reasons, including:

- Mental or physical health problems
- Recent substance or alcohol misuse
- Medical treatments, including operations
- Being a younger or older person

What is the Trust doing to prevent HCAIs?

We are working hard to make sure we provide a safe and clean environment for patients, visitors and staff.

- All staff have regular training and have updates on IPC topics
- We promote and monitor the use of hand sanitiser and hand washing

Matrons work closely with the Infection Prevention and Control team and cleaning staff to maintain high standards of cleanliness.

How can you help?

Please let staff know if:

- You have received treatment in any hospital in the last six months
- You have previously been told that you have MRSA
- You have had Clostridioides (*Clostridium*) *difficile* (*C. difficile*) diarrhoea in the past
- You experienced diarrhoea and/or vomiting before you were admitted

Whilst using our services, please:

- Wash your hands before meals and after going to the toilet
- Maintain good personal hygiene, such as daily washing, changing clothes, frequent showers or baths
- Tell a member of staff if the bathrooms or toilets are dirty
- Don't be afraid to ask staff if they have washed their hands before any procedure, such as taking a blood sample
- Tell a member of staff if you experience any diarrhoea and or vomiting

- Keep the amount of personal belongings to a minimum because storage is limited on the wards and it makes areas easier to access to clean

As a visitor, you can help by:

- Not visiting if you are feeling unwell or have flu, a heavy cold, diarrhoea or vomiting
- Speaking to the staff to discuss any queries or concerns about visiting the ward or about any issues of hygiene or cleanliness
- Using the hand sanitiser provided when entering the building

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints

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