

A Guide to Preventing Infection for Patients and Visitors



This booklet gives basic guidelines on hygiene and other measures to minimise infection risks.

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Introduction

Wherever there are large numbers of people using shared facilities, there is a chance that infections can spread. Many of the people we have staying in the hospital or visiting for appointments are ill, making it easier for them to catch infections. It is important that we ensure that every possible step is taken to reduce the chance of infections occurring, and also to prevent infections spreading.

At Kettering General Hospital, staff have developed a tool to identify patients who are at increased risk of acquiring infections. This could be due to their medical condition or to the treatment that may have been carried out.

On admission and during your stay, you will be assessed using the Kettering Infection Predictor (KIP) tool, and, according to your score, additional precautions taken. Staff using the tool will explain these precautions in more detail.

Hospital staff have a role in preventing infections from spreading; for instance, how we deal with used linen and disposal of clinical waste (clinical waste includes items such as used dressings or drip bags). There are simple things that you and your visitors can do to help. This booklet will give you guidance on the ways in which you can help.

Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is one of the most simple and effective ways of preventing the spread of infection. This is particularly important in hospitals.

At Kettering General Hospital we have launched a hand hygiene policy for staff.

The page opposite gives details of this, and you will see posters displaying this information on the wards.

As we are a partner in the national campaign for “Clean^{**your**}hands,” staff are happy to be challenged about their hand hygiene. You may wish to use the following phrase:

“Can I just ask, have you washed your hands?”

If you have any concerns regarding standards of hand hygiene, please ask to speak to the ward manager/sister/charge nurse or head of nursing. Alternatively you can contact the PALS office, situated near main reception.



Hand Hygiene for Staff

Staff should use **hand rub gel**:

- On entering a ward
- On entering a bay or patient's room
- Before and after skin contact with patients
- On leaving an isolation room
- After removing gloves
- Before clean and aseptic procedures
(An aseptic procedure is where the nurse/doctor tries to keep all germs away from the patient).
- When leaving the ward.

Staff should use **soap and water**:

- When hands are visibly dirty
- If hands become contaminated
- After visiting the toilet
- Before an aseptic procedure
- Before handling food
- Before breaks



Hand Hygiene

Your own personal hand hygiene is also very important.

Liquid soap and paper towels are provided for use at the sinks. Regular handwashing helps to reduce the build up of germs which occur naturally on your hands.

Alcohol gel is also available as an alternative to soap and water.

You should ensure that you wash your hands after using the toilet and before mealtimes. Please ask for help if you need it and the staff will provide you with either hand wipes or a bowl of water and towels.

It is important that if you have any wounds, a catheter, intravenous lines (drips) or drains, you do not touch them unnecessarily. Germs can be unintentionally transferred to them from your own hands.



SOCIAL HANDWASHING

For routine handwashing, liquid soap and water is adequate - using the technique described.

ASEPTIC HANDWASHING

(INVASIVE THERAPY)

AFTER handwashing apply one measure of alcohol hand rub and rub over hands until evaporated - using the technique described.

REMEMBER

1. Keep nails short and clean.
2. Wet hands first under running water.
3. Hand wash for 10-15 seconds.
4. Pay particular attention to thumbs, finger tips and between fingers.
5. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
6. Dry thoroughly.
7. Apply reconditioning cream regularly.

NB: Wet hands thoroughly before applying washing agent.



1. Rub palm to palm.



2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum.



3. Palm to palm, fingers interlaced.



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa.



6. Rotational rubbing back and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.

Rinse and dry hands thoroughly.

General Hygiene

Good general hygiene is also very important. The nursing staff will help you to wash, bath or shower. Please ask for assistance if you need help. If you are using your own toiletries, please ensure you keep them with you and do not leave them on the washbasin.

Dispose of razor blades safely and ensure flannels/sponges/towels are wrung out or allowed to dry after use and not simply tucked away in the wash bag where germs may multiply. Some ward areas may ask you to use disposable flannels and hospital towels.

Try and change your clothing regularly whilst in hospital. This will also make you feel fresh and clean. If your clothes are stained, ask staff for a patient linen bag so that your relatives can take the clothes home to be washed (instructions for use of the linen bag are included).



Wards

There are various ways in which hospital staff help prevent the spread of infection. A clean environment is very important, and our housekeeping staff work hard to maintain this; and in many areas they use special disinfectants to reduce the number of germs. The hospital also has access to a “Blitz” Team to carry out extra cleaning as needed.



We ask you to bring in only essential items for your stay. This avoids cluttering up your bed space and enables our staff to clean more effectively.

Whilst carrying out clinical procedures, staff will wear disposable aprons and gloves as a way of protecting you, other patients and themselves. Occasionally you will see them wearing protection to prevent eye contamination.



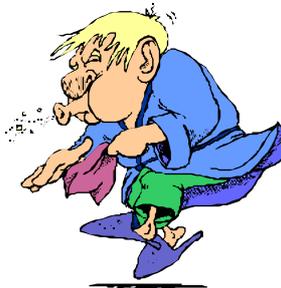
Visitors

At the entrance to every ward, a hand rub gel dispenser has been installed. All visitors and patients entering and leaving the ward should cleanse their hands using one squirt of gel. If you are unable to use the gel, please wash your hands with soap and water, at the nearest washbasin (many at ward entrances).



If someone wishes to visit you but feels unwell; for example, with a cough, cold, sore throat, rash or upset stomach, then they should not visit you in hospital. Please ask visitors to check by telephoning the ward prior to visiting and staff will be happy to advise on when it will be safe to visit. This will be a temporary measure and will help to prevent infection being brought into the hospital.

Many wards have restricted visiting hours and allow only 2 visitors at a time as well as discouraging young children. This is to allow staff to carry out their care for you as well as allowing you to rest. These measures also reduce the risk of infection.



Further Reading

The following information leaflets are available for further reading:

MRSA leaflet
Viral gastroenteritis leaflet
Clostridium difficile leaflet
Isolation leaflet



If you have any queries or concerns, please ask a member of the ward staff or contact the Infection Control Team

☎01536 492000

Ext 2482, 2566, 3323

If you wish to make any comments or require this information in another format or language, please contact the PALS Office:
Telephone 01536 493305 or email PALS@KGH.nhs.uk



KGH is a non-smoking environment

Author: Dawn Westmoreland, Lead Nurse Infection Control

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