

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

ABOUT

**PROTECTING OTHER PATIENTS FROM
INFECTION: “SOURCE ISOLATION”**

This leaflet is for patients who are nursed in isolation. It attempts to answer some of the questions about isolation nursing which have been asked by other patients in the past. After reading this leaflet, if you are still unsure about why you are in isolation and what this means, then please ask the nursing staff and they will be pleased to give a more detailed explanation.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as large print), please ask your nursing staff to arrange this or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Nurses on the number provided on the back page of this leaflet.

What is source isolation?

The main reason that patients are nursed in source isolation is to prevent other patients who may be at risk from acquiring infection, and to help prevent the spread of infection.

If you have developed an infection or have an infectious disease, you may be nursed in *source* isolation. This is sometimes referred to as "barrier nursing".

If you need to be nursed in source isolation, you are usually in a single room and special precautions are taken. Some single rooms have special ventilation systems. A notice is placed on the door that advises all health care workers of the precautions that they should take to help stop the spread of infection to others. These include the usual precautions taken for all patients, for example, wearing gloves and aprons when handling blood or body fluids. In addition, staff will wear gloves and aprons when they give you other care, for example, help with bathing or assisting with physiotherapy. Staff will always wash their hands and use alcohol hand gel before and after they have cared for you.

How long will I be nursed in isolation?

How long you are nursed in isolation depends on the type of infection you have, which ward you are on, and the nature of your illness.

The nurse who is responsible for your care will discuss your period of isolation with you.

Being nursed in isolation may make you feel lonely or excluded. If you have these feelings, or have any comments or concerns, please discuss them with your nurse.

Can I have visitors?

Yes, of course, but please ask staff before children visit. Please note that any family or friends must not visit the hospital if they have any of the following:

- Diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours
- Sore throat, cold or flu
- Rashes or other infections

If you are unsure about visitors, please ask the nursing staff.

Visitors should limit the number of presents, flowers or books they bring in. If your room becomes too cluttered it is difficult for the domestic staff to keep it clean.

When will my room be cleaned?

It is important that your room is kept clean and tidy. Any spillages should be dealt with promptly. The domestic staff will thoroughly clean your room daily. If you do not think your room is cleaned properly, please inform a nurse so that action can be promptly taken.

What about getting washed?

The nurses will help you if needed. Each single room has a wash basin for your use; some single rooms have en suite showers.

What about using the toilet?

If your room does not have an en suite toilet, you will be provided with a commode and/or urinal. Nurses will help you if needed and take away the bedpan or urinal but the commode will stay in your room. Please inform the nursing staff if you have used the commode so it can be promptly cleaned.

What about eating and drinking?

Your meals will be brought in to you. Nurses will help if needed. You will have a fresh jug of water for diluting juices etc every day which will be replenished on request.

How can I pass the time of day?

Each room has a Patient Communication System which includes a telephone, television, radio and a set of earphones for your use. If you want to use the system, ask the nursing staff to ask the Patient Communication System representative to organise a card for you. You can also buy newspapers, magazines and books, from the mobile shop. Please ask the nursing staff if you require assistance to obtain what you need.

Who are the Infection Prevention and Control Team?

The Infection Prevention and Control Team is a team of specialist doctors and nurses who advise on the prevention and control of infection in the hospital. Members of the Infection Prevention and Control Team are available to discuss your period of isolation or infection with you. Please ask your nurse if you would like to speak to a member of the team.

Please use this space to write down any questions or comments you might have.

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