



Reducing the risk of infection

A patient's guide

Helping local people live longer, healthier lives. Infection free.

We want to make Whittington Health as clean and safe as possible for everyone.

We want to make sure that we identify patients who come into hospital or a health centre with infections, give them the appropriate treatment, as well as prevent any other patient getting an infection while in our care.

What are we doing?

- **To minimise the spread of infection**, we ask all our staff to clean their hands with alcohol hand gel or soap and water before and after touching a patient.
- Clinical hand wash basins are in every clinical area and there is alcohol hand gel by every patient's bed.
- We make sure that all our health care settings are clean and tidy by using dedicated cleaners during the day from 7am to 9pm and our matrons regularly inspect the wards and departments.
- We test patients for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) before they come in for routine operations and if they are admitted to hospital through the Emergency Department.
- We monitor and use antibiotics to prevent and treat infections that can happen after surgery or because of a medical condition.
- As soon as an infectious bacterium (like C.Difficile) is detected, patients may be placed in a side room to receive care, in order to prevent the spread of infection.
- **All staff** use a simple set of measures (called 'Standard Precautions') for **every patient, at all times in the hospital**. These precautions reduce the risk of infection in various settings, including when you are at home. Please ask a member of staff for more information on our 'Standard Precautions'.
- All staff follow the 'Dress Code and Uniform Policy'. They must have bare arms below the elbow, no long sleeves and no jewellery, except a plain banded ring.



What can you and your visitors do?

Patients

- You should wash your hair and take a bath or shower as usual at home before coming in for surgery.
- Bring only what you need to the hospital. Our cleaning team must be able to access surfaces to clean. Cluttered patient lockers and tables and the floor space around your bed will prevent effective cleaning.
- **Talk to the staff looking after you.** It is okay to ask them if they have cleaned their hands before they touch you. It is okay to ask them if the equipment has been cleaned between uses, for example, the blood pressure machine.
- Always clean your hands after going to the toilet and before eating. You can use the designated patient's wash basin, or a wipe provided on the food tray. Ask for one, if it is not there.
- Make sure you take the whole course of your antibiotic treatment. Stopping too early or changing the routine can and does lead to resistances (the body stops responding to the antibiotics).
- If you have a urinary catheter (a flexible tube that drains urine from the bladder into a bag), an intravenous device (a tube that is inserted into a vein to administer fluids, medications, or blood transfusions), a drain or a wound dressing and it becomes uncomfortable or painful, please let your Nurse know.
- Do not touch your catheter, intravenous device, drain or wound dressings.
- Tell the staff if the bath/showers or toilets need cleaning.

Visitors

- When you arrive to the ward you must inform the Nurse/reception of who you are visiting. This is because there may be specific measures in the ward.
- **You must wash your hands or use the alcohol gel before and after your visit.**
- Unless you are responsible for caring for the patient, you will not need to use aprons or gloves.
- No more than two visitors at any time are allowed around the bed. Any children visiting must always be supervised by an adult.



- Do not sit on the bed.
- Do not visit if you are unwell, e.g. diarrhoea, heavy cold or flu. If you are unsure, please contact the ward/health centre before visiting.

Any further questions?

- If you have any further questions, please contact the infection control team, on 020 7288 3679, or you can ask the ward manager to contact us.
- Please watch this short video about infection control:
<https://youtu.be/zsRSgXNfl30?si=sVgcBcirAlhpxmrY&t=195>

The information in this leaflet has been jointly sourced from: [NHS England » Simple steps to keep you safe during your hospital stay](#) and [NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual \(NIPCM\) for England](#)

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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