

Patient information

Infection prevention: general information for patients and visitors

High standards of infection prevention and control are essential to safeguard the health and safety of patients, staff and visitors to the hospital. The West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is fully committed to reducing the risk of health care associated infections. We understand that infections can be distressing for patients and their families, as they often require treatment with antibiotics and may result in a longer hospital stay.

Hospital patients are more vulnerable to infection than a healthy person, this is because of:

- Their age; the very young and the elderly are at an increased risk.
- They may have medical conditions or be on treatment which affects their immunity.
- They have undergone surgery
- They have had a device placed in a vein to give them fluids or medications OR a tube placed in the bladder to drain urine.

What is the Trust doing to prevent healthcare associated infections?

We know that if healthcare workers clean their hands when caring for patients and we maintain high standards of cleanliness of patient equipment and the environment, we *can* prevent the spread of infection.

We ensure that all Trust staff receive regular mandatory training on infection prevention and control with a particular focus on hand hygiene. You can expect staff to clean their hands:

- Before they carry out any patient care
- After they have completed patient care
- Before serving food and drinks
- After contact with the patients surroundings
- After assisting patients to use the commode or toilet
- Between caring for one patient and another

We work hard to make sure we provide a safe and clean environment for patients, visitors and staff. Cleaning schedules are displayed in every ward and department.

Our Matrons work closely with the infection prevention and control team and the Housekeeping staff to ensure that we maintain high standards of cleanliness in our wards and departments

Sometimes we may recommend that patients are treated in a single room to help stop the spread of infection.

If there is an outbreak of infection e.g. diarrhoea and vomiting it may be necessary to close a ward to admissions and restrict visiting.

We will advise you should this occur.

As a patient you can help by letting staff know if:

- **You have received treatment in any hospital in the UK or abroad in the last year.**
- You develop any diarrhoea and/or vomiting whilst you are an inpatient, or if you had these symptoms before you were admitted.
- You have previously been told that you have MRSA or Carbapenamase resistant bacteria (sometimes called CPE or CRE), or have had *Clostridium difficile* infection.
- We recommend that you always clean your hands before meals, after going to the toilet or if your hands are visibly dirty. The nurses are there to give you help should you require it. Small hand wipes are available if you are unable to get to a wash hand basin.

- Please do not be afraid to ask a member of staff if they have cleaned their hands. They will not mind being reminded to do so.
- Please tell a member of staff if you have concerns regarding the cleanliness of equipment or the environment.

As a visitor you can help by:

- Not visiting if you feel unwell, or have flu, a heavy cold, or diarrhoea and vomiting.
- Not visiting the hospital if you have had sickness or diarrhoea until you have been more than 48 hours free of symptoms.
- Speaking to the staff to discuss any queries or concerns about visiting the ward or about any issues of hygiene or cleanliness.
- Cleaning your hands when entering and just before leaving the ward or department.

Further information

If you require any further information please speak to a member of the ward staff. Nursing staff can also contact the Infection Prevention Team if required.

Further information can also be found at <http://www.nhs.uk>

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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