

HAND HYGIENE

Hand Hygiene is the single most important way to prevent infection. Hands should be cleaned before and after visits with patients, after contact with blood or other potentially infectious material and after removing gloves or other protective clothing.

Hand hygiene makes a difference!

Clean your hands often.

Visitors should clean their hands before and after visits with patients by-

HAND RUBS

- Alcohol hand rubs are available in most health care settings. Rubs are practical and an acceptable alternative to hand washing.
- Hand Rub Solution should come in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Hands should be rubbed together vigorously.

HANDWASHING – DOING IT RIGHT!

- Wet your hands: then apply soap.
- Rub the soap lather all over your hands.
- Wash all surfaces of your hands and fingers for 10 to 15 seconds. Be sure to get under your nails, around cuticles and between fingers.
- Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse.
- Dry your hands completely using a clean towel.
- Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands.



OTHER INFECTION CONTROL PRIORITIES

- Cleaning standards are important to us and we conduct regular cleaning audits using the Department of Human Services Cleaning Standards for Victorian Hospitals.
- Our health care facility is environmentally conscious and our waste disposal meets waste guidelines.
- Staff health, including immunisation is a major priority so that our staff are not a risk to patients and they are protected from contracting infections from patients.

VISITORS – REMEMBER

- Ask about special instructions - You may be asked not to bring personal items or flowers, which can harbour germs harmful to patients.
- Follow instructions on signs.
- Ask about rules for visiting – depending on how the patients disease is spread, your visit may be discouraged or limited – ASK THE STAFF.
- Be understanding – these precautions may seem extreme, but remember, they help protect everyone.

References:
Infection Control guidelines. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. 2004.

This brochure is based on the latest information available as of October 2008.

Produced by:
Rural Infection Control Practice Group (RICPRAC) Vic, 2008

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RICPRAC
RURAL INFECTION CONTROL
PRACTICE GROUP

INFECTION CONTROL



A Patient/Visitor Information Brochure

3RD EDITION

Feel free to ask questions.
Staff will be happy to talk with you about infection control.

Remember to clean your hands.
Do this often and correctly

INFECTION CONTROL – OUR PRIORITY

- Infection control is the responsibility of management and all health care workers within our hospital.
- Infection control achievements are reported in the hospital Quality of Care Report.
- All new staff must attend a specific infection control orientation session and are expected to attend regular infection control education updates.
- Reusable instruments and equipment are cleaned and sterilised according to Australian Standards and compliance with standards is monitored.
- Single use policy. This ensures that 'single use' equipment is not re-processed/re-used.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Infection control is an essential part of quality health care. It recognises that patients can acquire infections while receiving health care and that these infections can be minimised by adopting appropriate infection control practices.

Both patients and healthcare workers can be at risk of acquiring infections while they are in the health care setting.

WHAT IS AN INFECTION?

An infection is an illness caused by “germs” such as bacteria and viruses. An infection is “contagious” / “infectious” when it can be passed from person to person. The common cold is an example of a contagious disease.

By following a few simple steps we can reduce the risk of spreading germs to patients, staff and visitors.

Staff, patients and their visitors have an important role to play in infection control.



WHY PRECAUTIONS ARE USED

Infections like HIV and hepatitis B and C can be passed through contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials.

Someone with these viruses or other illness may not look sick. Because of this, standard precautions apply to all patients every time contact with blood or body fluids is possible.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Standard precautions are used at all times with all patients. The fact that your care gives use standard precautions does not necessarily mean that you have a contagious disease. But to protect you and themselves, they assume that every patient may have an infection.

Standard precautions, which include hand hygiene and wearing protective clothing, are good ways to prevent the spread of these and other serious infections. Even visitors must follow standard precautions.

ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

Some patients may need extra care if they have certain infections.

Additional precautions are tailored to the particular germ causing the infection and how the germ is spread. Additional precautions may include:

- Single room, with ensuite or dedicated toilet.
- Dedicated patient equipment.
- Special airconditioning requirements.
- Additional use of protective equipment or clothing such as masks and gowns.
- Restricted movement of patients and staff.

Please contact your ward nurse or ask to speak to the hospital infection control nurse if you would like more information about standard precautions, additional precautions or any other infection control issue.