

Being cared for in isolation to prevent the spread of infection

Infection Prevention

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet hopes to reassure you that being in isolation will not affect your care or treatment in hospital.

Isolation is one way to stop the spread of infection from one person to another person. In isolation we will keep you away from other patients. If you have an infection caused by germs (a bacteria or virus) that could spread to other patients, you may be cared for in a single room. Or an exclusive bay in a ward called a 'Cohort bay'. You may have your own toilet and washing facilities.

Being in isolation will let healthcare staff reduce the risk of spreading any infection to you or other patients. Staff may wear gloves, aprons and/ or masks depending on why you are being isolated. We will put an isolation notice on your door. This is to remind staff to take extra care and stop the spread of germs. The notice on the door will not say why you are in a single room. This is so that your confidentiality is maintained. Hospital staff will explain to you why you are in isolation. They will answer any questions you may have.

How do infections spread?

The risk of getting or spreading an infection can be higher while you are in hospital. In an hospital it can be spread in 3 different ways:

- **By touch (contact):** contaminated hands are the most common way that infections are spread. It can spread by person to person contact with an infected person. Or by contact with contaminated equipment or the environment around a patient.
- **Droplets of moisture:** these droplets stay in the air for a short time. They can travel 1 to 2 metres. Physical closeness can lead to the spread of infection.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

- **Aerosols:** these are smaller than the droplets described above. They can travel further and can stay in the air for longer. They can spread infection by contact or by breathing them in.

Isolating vulnerable patients

Some patients need to be isolated to protect them from infections. This is called protective isolation. This is because their body cannot fight infections well. They have low immunity. This makes them more at risk to infections. Patients having chemotherapy for cancer or leukaemia, or after bone marrow transplantation are more at risk. We will isolate these patients in a room that does not allow likely infected air into the room. This is called a positive pressure room.

How long will I be in isolation?

How long you will isolate will depend on the germ you have. And if you are having any treatment for it. If it is a virus, you may get better without treatment. You could be in isolation for a few days or your whole stay at the hospital. We will move you to an open ward or discharge you when you do not need to isolate anymore. Your room or bed space will be cleaned before it is used by another patient. We have a limited number of single rooms in our hospitals. We often have to prioritise different infections. We may move you out of your single room.

Can I leave my bed area or room?

You will need to stay in the room. Should only leave when having any treatment or as advised by the Infection Prevention Team. You must not use the day room, kitchen or any other shared areas when you are in isolation. You must not spend time with other patients. This could put them at risk of them becoming more ill. When people are unwell their immune system changes and they are much more likely to react to germs.

The Infection Prevention Team will advise ward staff of any requirements if you need to visit other departments.

Hand hygiene

Keeping your hands clean is the best way of preventing the spread of infections. You and anyone visiting you must use the hand sanitiser:

- at the entrance of the ward or at your bed space
- when entering and leaving the ward

In some situations, you may need to wash your hands at the sink using soap and water. This is when patients have symptoms of diarrhoea.

You must clean your hands before eating, before leaving your room, after using the toilet, and any time you touch any of your body fluids.

Do I have to tell people about the germ?

You do not need to tell anyone that you have social contact with, such as at day centres, clubs or with friends. You should tell anyone that comes to your home to help with your care so they can protect themselves and any other people that may visit.

In hospital, it is always best to tell staff so they can make sure you get the right treatment as soon as possible. Your family doctor (GP) may be told so that they can do the same.

How will I be taken care of when isolating?

- We will give you clear information about why you are being cared for in isolation.
- Depending on the reason for your isolation, we will put a yellow, green, blue, orange, red or purple isolation sign on your door.
- We will try to offer you a single room with your own toilet facilities. This is not always possible. We will try and get a commode in your room or a dedicate a toilet for you on the main ward.
- Healthcare staff will wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) or protective clothing that is needed. This is to reduce the risk of passing the germ to others. For example, if the infection is likely to be spread by breathing in droplets of the germs, staff will wear masks.
- Hospital staff will clean their hands before they come into the room, and when they leave.
- We will offer you a daily wash either at your bed side or in a shower.
- You should keep the door of your room shut. This is if it is safe to do so.
- Your visitors do not need to wear protective clothing. They will need to wear protective clothing if they are helping with personal care such as washing/ toileting. Please speak to the nursing staff for protective clothing.
- Being in isolation will not affect your care. Ward staff will advise other departments of any precautions needed if you need to visit them (for example, if you need to go for an X-ray). The Infection Prevention Team are available if more advice is needed.
- We will adapt our care to your personal circumstances. You may have special assessments from other therapists, such as physiotherapy or occupational therapy as needed.

Tips for coping with isolation

Some patients can find it difficult to be in isolation. The tips below may help:

- Talk to your nurse or doctor about why you are in isolation and ask any questions you may have. Remember that isolation helps to keep you safe and healthy. Please speak to the ward staff if you have any concerns.
- You may want to have some of your personal things with you to help. This can be your favorite books and music.
- Try to have calls, FaceTime chats or visits from friends and relatives.

- Do activities to help pass the time. This can be games, films, books, magazines, arts and crafts.
- Try to have a daily routine. Open your curtains during the day and close them at night if possible. Try to not sleep during the day. Sleeping during the day to cope with boredom can cause trouble sleeping at night.
- If you notice changes in your mood or behaviour, like feeling very sad or irritable, talk to your healthcare team.

Please tell us if:

- you need any help by using your call bell.
- you feel lonely and fed up because you are not in contact with other people. This feeling is not unusual and we can help you cope. We do understand that being cared for in isolation may be frustrating and difficult at times.
- you have any concerns about the standard of cleaning in your room.

Can I have visitors?

Your friends and relatives can visit. They must follow the visiting rules in place at the time. The visit timings can change depending on the needs of the hospital. Please check with the nurse in charge for more advice.

We advise you not to have babies visit you, or visitors who are unwell themselves, as they may be at risk of picking up an infection more easily. Parents, carers and partners may be able to stay with their relative on some wards, please ask for further information.

Please ask your visitors to take some of your belongings home if the room is becoming cluttered. If staff can't clean your room, they will not be able to remove germs.

Friends and family should not come into the hospital if they:

- feel unwell.
- have a sore throat, cold or flu-like symptoms.
- have had a rash or any other known infection in the past 48 hours.
- have been sick or had diarrhoea in the past 48 hours.

Your visitors do not need to wear aprons, gloves or masks unless told to do so by the staff. **Your visitors should:**

- cover any cuts or wounds before they enter your room.
- not sit on your bed.
- take extra care to wash their hands when leaving your room. They should use the hand sanitiser either outside the room or at the entrance to the ward.
- not use any shared areas (including play rooms for siblings).

Will isolating cause a delay in going home?

This will not cause a delay if you are going to your own home. This includes nursing or residential care if you have a single room. If you need to be transferred to another hospital there may be a slight delay while they organise a room for you.

What advice should I follow at home?

Once you are in your own home you don't need to do anything differently. This is because the infection does not have the same risk in a non-hospital setting. You do not need to take the same precautions at home. If a relative or carer is helping you with washing, or dressing a wound, it is important that they wash their hands before and afterwards. Good personal hygiene is important:

- Have a shower or bath daily.
- Always wash your hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Do not share face cloths, sponges or towels with other family members.
- Bed linen and clothes can usually be washed as normal in a washing machine using the warmest temperature recommended on the labels.

If you need to continue taking special care at home, the hospital staff will talk to you about this before you leave.

Preventing the spread of infection at Leicester's hospitals

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections across our hospitals we have a dedicated Infection Prevention Team (0116 258 5448).

We have policies which are evidence based and regularly reviewed. We closely monitor infection rates across our hospitals. Any risks and trends are reported to our Infection Prevention Assurance Committee, our Board of Directors and Public Health England.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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