



# Source Isolation

## Why do I need to be isolated?

Bacteria and viruses can cause a variety of human infections. These can sometimes cause problems in hospitals; therefore, special care is needed to reduce the risk of spreading infection to other patients and staff. Some patients are also more at risk of infection because of their illness and need to be in isolation to help protect them from catching infections.

Please tell us if you feel lonely because you are not in contact with other people for a period; this feeling is not unusual, and we can help you cope. We do appreciate that being cared for in isolation may be frustrating and difficult at times.

## What is isolation?

Isolation is when you are cared for in a single room if you have a suspected or confirmed infection or require isolation because you are particularly vulnerable to infection and need to be isolated to reduce the risk of you acquiring an infection (this is called Protective Isolation). If your health care worker has advised that you require isolation a sign will be placed on the door indicating whether the door should remain closed or may be kept open. This is to reduce the risk of the infection spreading to others. It is important to protect patients, staff, and visitors from the risk of infection.

Being told that you have an infection can be a worrying time for you. It is not uncommon for patients with infections to be isolated and to have special care measures, so do not be alarmed. You should always discuss any concerns with those caring for you or ask the ward to contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team who will be more than happy to speak to you about any concerns you have relating to the reason for needing source isolation.

## Common illnesses needing isolation

You will be informed of why you need to be isolated. It is usually because you have an infected wound or an infection that is making you unwell and is a risk to others.

## What other precautions are necessary?

Hand washing is one of the most effective methods of preventing the spread of infection. All staff and visitors must clean their hands using alcohol hand gel or soap and water to clean their hands when entering or leaving your room. Occasionally people can forget, if this happens don't be afraid to remind them, they won't mind. You should also be washing your own hands regularly.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff will need to wear PPE when caring for you to reduce the risk of passing your infection/bugs to other patients and themselves. Occasionally staff may have to wear masks if the infection is likely to be spread by breathing the bugs in for example with cases of flu.

## Can I leave my room or bed?

This depends on how the infection is spread. If you are too unwell to leave your room, all the facilities required will be provided for you. We ask that you remain in your room and do not wander around the ward area or hospital. Any investigations in different departments will, in most instances, go ahead as planned. Staff in the relevant departments will be made aware of any special precautions required. Being in isolation will not affect the care you receive.

You may be asked to wear a face mask when attending another part of the hospital for an investigation or consultation.

## Can I visit other patients?

We ask that you do not visit any other patients in the hospital. If there are special



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circumstances, then please discuss these with your health care worker. Advice may also be sought from a member of the Infection Prevention and Control team. You must not share personal items, food, or equipment with other patients. If you have a wound, do not take off your dressing.

### Can I have visitors?

Visitors must speak to the nurse looking after you before visiting. We ask that visitors wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol hand gel before they visit, after handling any items or your environment and before they leave your room and don't mix with other patients on the ward. This makes it easier for us to prevent the spread of the bugs. Visitors do not have to wear gloves and aprons unless they are helping you with your care (e.g., personal care). If they are visiting someone else apart from you, it is best if they see them first.

### When should a visitor be discouraged from visiting?

Ideally, babies and children should not visit. Any children visiting must be always supervised and should be discouraged from crawling on the floor. Visitors should not use your toilet or eat and drink while visiting you. Anyone who has been unwell must not visit. Examples of when not to visit includes symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting in the last 48 hours, when experiencing a heavy cold, flu like symptoms or a chest infection. Visitors who have wounds should ensure these are covered appropriately. Visitors must use chairs provided and should be discouraged from sitting on your bed. This will help to reduce the risk of contamination from external sources which may pose a risk to you and also prevent the visitors from carrying any bugs outside with them on their clothing.

### What about my laundry?

It is safe for relatives to take your personal laundry home to be washed. Laundry should be washed on the hottest temperature recommended for the fabric and not over filling the machine. If laundry is heavily soiled, it is best to wash this separately to other laundry. Always ask the staff if you or your relatives are unsure. Hands should be washed immediately after handling dirty laundry or waste items.

### Cleaning of isolation rooms

Cleanliness of the environment is very important, and we do our utmost to ensure that the wards and departments are kept clean, tidy, and fit for purpose. Rooms are routinely cleaned daily, with additional cleaning carried out as required. Help us to clean your room by only having essential items you need, as cluttered rooms are more difficult to clean.

### Can I still go home?

You will not have to stay in hospital any longer than necessary, you will be allowed home when medically fit.

### What will happen when I home?

When you go home you should live your life as normally as possible. It is very unusual that any special care will be required when you go home. However, if necessary the staff will discuss this with you before you are discharged. Not all precautions taken in hospital are necessary at home. However, it is advisable for everyone to wash their hands before handling food, before eating and after using the toilet and handling soiled linen/clothing.

### Further information

If you have further questions, please speak to a member of the ward team or ask them to contact the Infection Prevention and Control team.