

Isolation and infection prevention

Information for patients and visitors

This leaflet explains why you may be put in isolation and how we prevent the spread of infection in hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you.

What is isolation nursing?

Isolation or barrier nursing is one way of preventing the spread of infection from one person to another in hospital. Sometimes you may be isolated to help protect you while you are particularly vulnerable to picking up an infection. You may need to be nursed in a single room for a while. Occasionally you will be with other patients in a dedicated area. This is also known as cohort nursing.

The ward staff will explain why you are being moved into isolation and the extra safety measures that will need to be taken.

A poster will be put on the door to inform staff and visitors that certain precautions must be taken. We understand this may be difficult for you, but the staff will do their best to make your stay in hospital as comfortable as possible.

The staff will make sure you can always reach your bedside call bell to call for assistance. You will still receive the same level of service from the catering team in terms of meals, snacks and beverages.

Why do I need to be isolated?

Microorganisms (tiny living things) can cause a variety of human infections. These can sometimes cause problems in hospitals. This means special care is needed to reduce the risk of spreading infections to other patients and staff. Some patients are also more at risk of infection and so may be isolated to protect them from catching infections.

What precautions will staff take?

The exact precautions staff will take will depend on the infection you have, or are thought to have, and the type of task they are doing.

- All staff will wear protective clothing (for example aprons and gloves) when having physical contact with you.
- In some instances, they will wear protective clothing coming into your room.
- They have been trained how to wash their hands correctly, and what measures are necessary.
- Equipment that we use to help look after you will be cleaned, disinfected and re-used or disposed of, depending on the type of equipment.

- A member of staff who is bringing your medications, meals or drinks does not necessarily need to wear aprons, gloves or mask. They either wash their hands or use alcohol hand rub before entering and when leaving the room.

Will being in isolation affect my care?

Being in isolation will not affect the care you receive. Depending on your infection, you will need to stay in your room until you are discharged home. However, you will be able to leave the room to go for urgent investigations such as X-rays. Your doctor and nurse will advise you about this.

Can I leave my room?

We ask that you not leave your room unless given permission to do so by the nursing staff. You will be asked to always keep your door closed. This helps reduce the risk of any infections spreading. Please talk to a nurse if this begins to cause you a problem.

You can still have any treatment and investigations that you need. Where possible, these will be carried out in your room. However, if you need to leave your room for treatment or an investigation, the staff in these departments will take the relevant precautions to allow your treatment to go ahead safely.

It may be possible to bring you back onto the main ward at a later stage once it is safe to do so. The ward staff will take this decision and explain it clearly to you and your family and friends.

How can I help?

Wash your hands:

- before a meal or snack time
- after using the toilet facilities
- before and after leaving your room
- when your hands are dirty

If you have your own toilet facilities, please only use these. Please ask a member of staff if you are unsure.

Hand wipes are available if you cannot access the sink.

Please limit how many personal belongings you store in your room, especially on your bedside locker and table. This helps our cleaning teams to keep your room as clean as possible which further reduces the risk of infection.

Can I have visitors?

Yes, you may have visitors. However, visitors must:

- speak to the nurse looking after you to find out any extra actions they need to take before going into your room or bay
- wear gloves and aprons if they are going to have close contact with you, such as helping you wash and dress – the nurse will tell them if any other protection is needed
- wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol hand rub before coming into your room or bay and after visiting you

Will my discharge from hospital be delayed?

Usually, being in isolation will not cause delay if you are going back to your own home. It may affect your transfer to a nursing or residential home. This depends on the type of infection you have, and time required for the nursing or residential home to prepare.

There may be a slight delay if you need to be transferred to another hospital, because they may want to place you in a single room. This could take time to organise.

What happens when I go home?

. It is very unusual to need any special care when you go home. However, if you do, we will discuss this with you before you are discharged. Please contact your GP if you need further advice after you have gone home.

Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

If you or your carers have any questions about your treatment or any information in this leaflet, please do not hesitate to ask one of the members of the nursing or medical staff on your ward.

You can also contact the Infection Prevention and Control team at our hospital sites:

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Tel: **020 3299 8173**

Email: **kch-tr.KCH-IC-Nurse@nhs.net**

Princess Royal University Hospital, Orpington Hospital, Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup.

Tel: **01689 863459**

Email: **kch-tr.PRUHInfectionPreventionandControlNurses@nhs.net**

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: **020 3299 4618**

Email: **kings.pals@nhs.net**

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net