

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 doctors or nurses caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What is isolation?

Sometimes we need to move patients to:

- a single room, which may have its own toilet or washing facilities, or
- a dedicated bay in a ward

Being cared for in this way, in a separate area away from other patients, is often called 'isolation'. It allows healthcare workers to reduce the risk of spreading any infection to you or other patients.

Staff caring for you may wear gloves, aprons and masks, depending on why you are in isolation. They will explain this to you, but please ask them if you would like to know more about your care.

Why do I need to be isolated?

Bacteria and viruses (germs) can cause a range of infections, so we need to take special care to reduce the risk of them spreading to other patients and staff in hospital:

- you may have a germ or an infection that we want to ensure is not spread to other patients
- you may be at a greater risk of picking up an infection because of your illness so you need to be in isolation to help protect you

How are infections spread?

You can be at a greater risk of picking up or spreading infection while you are in hospital. This is because of the frequent contact you will have with healthcare workers and the hospital environment. Other patients may also carry infection.

Contaminated hands (hands that have germs on them) are the most common way of spreading infection. To prevent this you will see healthcare workers washing their hands with soap and water or using alcohol hand rub before putting on and after removing their gloves. They



do this each time they care for patients with infections, if they are in contact with patients' body fluids or when doing something invasive like dealing with a wound or urinary catheter device.

How did I get this infection?

You may have got it by chance. Healthcare contact and your treatment – such as taking antibiotics – can make you more likely to pick up germs, and this can happen whether you are in hospital or at home.

Will I be able to have investigations or tests?

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. Being in isolation will not affect the care you receive.

Do I need to stay in the room at all times?

This will depend on why you are in isolation. The Infection Prevention and Control team will let the ward staff know about any extra care you need if you have to visit any other departments.

Can I have visitors?

- Visitors must speak to the nurse looking after you before visiting.
- The nurse will let your visitors know any extra care they need to take before going into your room or bay.
- If visitors are going to have close contact with you, such as helping you with washing and dressing, they will be asked to wear gloves and aprons. The nurse will tell them if any other protection is needed.
- Visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol hand rub before coming into your room or bay and after visiting you just before they leave.

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 whether there is a side room available for you and the type of infection you have, whether you still have symptoms and whether it is still safe for you to be transferred. The nurse on the ward can speak to the Infection Prevention and Control nurse and can advise you accordingly.

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 and this could take time to organise.

What happens when I go home?

You should live your life as normally as possible. 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. After you have gone home, if you need more advice, please contact your GP (home doctor).

Where can I find out more?

If you would like more information, please ask your doctor or the nurse in charge on the ward.



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 teams at our hospital sites:

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Tel: **020 3299 4374**

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

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

Tel: **01689 863463**

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

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as 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'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.



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.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

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

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital,

Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: **01689 863252**

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

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net.