Healthcare-associated infections

Infection Control Team
Patient Information Leaflet

What are healthcare-associated infections?

Germs are part of our everyday lives. They surround us in the environment and are present on our skin and inside our bodies where they protect us from other germs, and help us digest our food.

We have all had the usual coughs, colds, flu, boils and sore throats but healthy people normally recover with no ill effects.

Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are infections that can result from the care and treatment that patients receive while they are in a healthcare environment. These infections are not unique to hospitals and may affect people in care homes, GP surgeries and dental practices.

There are many germs that can be transmitted in a healthcare setting and they may be responsible for a wide range of illness and disease. Some can cause diarrhoea and sickness whilst others may cause wound or chest infections.

People can be more likely to get an infection while they are in hospital if they:

- Are already unwell.

- Have long term health problems.

- Are having surgery.

- Have a catheter.

- Are having intravenous fluids.

The elderly and the young are also more likely to get infections because their immune systems may not be as good.

What can we do to reduce the risks?

The best way we can reduce the risk of germs being passed from person to person is to wash and dry our hands thoroughly.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is committed to reducing the risk of infections to staff, patients and visitors:

- Our staff receive training when they first start and updates every year on hand washing, sterile techniques and other infection control issues.

- We have an active hand washing campaign within the Trust to remind everyone to do this.

- Alcohol gel is conveniently placed at the entrance to wards and departments and at the end of patients' beds for everyone to use.

- Patients who are suspected of or who have an infection are usually nursed in side rooms on their own in order to prevent germs being passed onto other vulnerable patients.

What should patients do to reduce the risk?

- Staff should wash their hands before examining you or performing a procedure. Please do not be afraid to check if they have done so.

- Keep your own hands clean.

What should visitors do to reduce the risk?

To reduce the risk of infections, visitors should not:

- Visit patients when they are feeling unwell or if they have recently had a cold, cough, flu, sickness or diarrhoea.

- Touch any equipment or wound dressings.

- Sit on patient beds.

- Use patient toilets.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Infection Control Team on 01384 244174 (8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

http://dgft.nhs.uk/about-us/quality/infection-control/patient-information-leaflets/

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta brosura poate fi pusa la dispozitie tiparita cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau in alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugam sunati la 0800 073 0510.

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