

Source isolation

Information for patients



Germs are found on everyone. These germs may live there without causing you harm. However, if the germs get in the wrong place at the wrong time they may cause an infection which could spread to other people.

Why do I need to be isolated?

Sometimes, germs which live harmlessly on you may cause serious harm to other vulnerable people. So although you may feel well and do not have an infection yourself you may be placed in isolation to protect other patients. You will be told why isolation is important for you by the nursing or medical staff.

Isolation helps keep everyone safe from the spread of infection.

What does isolation mean?

There are many different terms used to describe isolation-barrier nursing, source isolation for example but they all mean the same thing:

- You will be placed in a single room (*the door will be kept closed*).
- Healthcare workers will wear aprons and gloves when they enter the room.
- You will have your room cleaned twice daily.
- Being in isolation will not affect the care you receive.

What can I do to help the staff keep everyone safe?

You need to:

- Stay in your room and keep the door closed to help prevent the spread of infection to others.

- If you need assistance, please use the call buzzer.
- Keep personal items to a minimum to help us keep your room clean and free from germs.
- Wash your hands- it is important, particularly before eating and after going to the toilet.
- Do not share anything (*for example food, magazines, cigarettes*) with other patients as this can lead to the spread of infection.
- Arrange for personal clothing to be laundered at home (*hottest wash your machine will allow but at least 60°C*) to kill any germs present.

Can I leave the isolation room?

You will leave the room to have investigations and treatments. Otherwise you should stay in your room as much as possible.

We know that being in isolation for long periods can make you feel lonely and fed up. If this happens please discuss your feelings with the nurse in charge.

Your need to be in isolation will be reviewed daily by the ward team. Isolation will be stopped as soon as it is safe to do so.

Can I have visitors?

Yes, although they will need to speak to the ward staff before entering your room.

Visitors should:

- Follow the advice given to them by the ward staff.
- Wash their hands with soap and water before leaving the room.
- Bring as little with them as is practical into the room.
- Not visit other patients after visiting you.
- Stay away if unwell themselves.

It is not necessary for visitors to wear apron and gloves unless they are helping with your care (for example helping with washing and dressing).

Children should not visit unless there is an exceptional reason to do so. Please discuss with the nurse in charge if this is the case.

Will isolation delay me leaving hospital?

Your doctor will decide when you are well enough to leave hospital. Isolation will not delay your discharge to your own home. If you are being discharged to another hospital or a nursing or respite home you may need to stay in hospital until it is safe for you to move there.

What should I do when I go home?

- You should lead a normal life when you leave hospital. It is unusual for any special care to be taken when you are outside the hospital. However if any special care is necessary the ward staff will discuss this with you before you leave.
- You and your family/friends should wash their hands at the normal times (before eating and after going to the toilet) and special care should be taken if any of your family provides nursing care for you.
- You should keep a note of why you were isolated so you can inform your GP at the time of your next visit and also tell the hospital staff if you come into hospital again.

Who can I call if have any questions?

The nurse in charge of the ward should be able to answer any of your questions. Otherwise, please contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on **0113 20 66339**.

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