

Visitors Information Sheet – Protection from Infection

The hospital has a duty of care to protect visitors against the risk of catching infection. It is therefore important that the risks are clearly explained to anyone who enters the hospital. In general it is not necessary for visitors to wear protective clothing (aprons and gloves) unless there is a risk of soiling the clothes with body fluids. However, one exception would be to use masks for those visiting a patient with open tuberculosis.

Visitors should wash their hands properly as directed by the nursing staff when they leave the ward and not spend time looking after other patients in the hospital.

Tuberculosis

Visitors who are susceptible to infection (children, people with cancer, on steroids, with HIV or AIDS) should not visit patients with tuberculosis. If they do come into the room, then we would have to teach them how to wear a special mask properly. Visitors who have cared for the patient at home before admission to hospital with tuberculosis, will not need to take any precautions, because the greatest risk of catching the disease arises in the weeks or months before diagnosis. A check of the patient's family members or close contacts can be arranged in the chest clinic by a link nurse.

Children

We tend to discourage children from visiting hospital. This is not an absolute rule and arrangements can be made if you talk to the nurse in charge. The reason for this is that children themselves often have infections, such as chicken pox, which can pose a risk to you and other patients. In addition, they are very susceptible to infections like tuberculosis.

Colds and Influenza

Please do not visit the hospital to see patients with leukaemia or lymphoma if you have a cold. Some respiratory infections like measles or chicken pox are so infectious that visitors with these infections must not come to the hospital.

Finally

We expect all caring staff to observe simple rules of hygiene. The rules in this hospital are that staff do not wear a wrist watch because it is not possible to clean the hands properly with a wrist watch on. Secondly, they should clean their hands, either by using alcohol gel or by washing their hands before they examine you or perform any other more invasive procedure.

