



Infection prevention and control

This information sheet explains what the Infection Control Team are doing to prevent hospital infections at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) and what you can do to help us to minimise the risk of infections during your child's stay.

Children and young people can be at a higher risk of getting an infection when they are ill. The body has natural defence mechanisms to fight off infections, but these may be affected for a variety of reasons when someone is ill. For example, when a child has an operation, the surgical wound means that the natural skin barrier is broken, which could allow bacteria (germs) to enter the body. Bacteria and viruses (germs) may come from other patients, staff, visitors (including siblings), equipment or the environment.

This information sheet will explain the key principles that will help to prevent infections.

Hand hygiene

Hand washing or using alcohol gel is the most effective way of stopping infections passing from person to person.

What we do

- All our staff have been trained in hand hygiene.
- We expect all staff to wash or gel their hands before and after having contact with your child.
- Every month, we audit compliance with our hand hygiene protocol.

What you can do

- If you are not sure if a staff member has cleaned their hands, it is ok for you to ask.
- Make sure that your child washes their hands before meals and after using the toilet.
- Make sure that you wash your hands before and after visiting your child, before meals or feeding

your child, after visiting the toilet and after changing your child's nappy or helping them use the toilet or bed pan.

- Ask your visitors to do the same.

Monitoring What we do

- We test all patients before or on admission if they carry germs that are resistant to common antibiotics such as MRSA (meticillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) for example. The test is done by taking a swab from the nose and the throat, as well as sending a faeces (poo) sample.
- If your child is carrying a germ that is resistant to the common antibiotics, we will nurse them in a single room and alert this on your child's computer record.

What you can do

- If your child has been in contact with someone who has an infectious disease, such as chickenpox, shingles or measles or has developed a rash, let us know before you come to GOSH. This will help us to prevent it spreading to other children and their families.
- If one of your other children (siblings of the patient) has been in contact with someone who has an infectious disease, such as chickenpox, shingles or measles or has developed a rash, check first with the ward if it is ok for them to visit.
- Do not visit or bring in your other children if any of you have symptoms including diarrhoea and vomiting, a cough or a cold.

- Tell your visitors that they should not visit if they have symptoms like diarrhoea and vomiting, a cough or a cold.

Environment

What we do

- Cleanliness of the environment is very important to us and we are making sure that our wards and departments are clean and tidy.

What you can do

- You can help us by telling us if you think an area or a piece of equipment is not clean enough – please let the nurse in charge know.
- Please keep your child's room or bed area tidy and free from clutter to help our domestic staff to clean the area.

Isolation

What we do

If your child has an infection we may need to nurse them in isolation in a single room. The aim of isolation is to prevent the transfer of infection from infected patients to other patients, staff and visitors.

Infections can be passed on in different ways:

- They may be spread by direct contact with another person, usually by the hands.
- They can be passed on indirectly from one person to another via contaminated equipment, toys or the environment.
- They may be airborne from someone coughing or sneezing and can be passed on through the inhalation of airborne droplets.

If we need to look after your child in an isolation room, we will explain to you and your child why this is necessary. Depending on what type of infection your child has, staff may need to wear gloves, aprons or face masks when looking after your child.

What you can do

- Make sure that everyone cleans their hands before and after leaving the room with soap and water or alcohol gel.
- Make sure that the door of the room is kept closed.
- Make sure that all toys and equipment used for your child are kept in their room until they are better and no longer need to be isolated.
- Make sure that your child stays in their room and does not go to any other areas of the ward.
- Do not visit other children and parents on the ward and make sure that they do not come to visit you.
- Check with the nurse in charge if you can use the parent's room and kitchen on the ward.
- Check with the nurse in charge if your other children can come to visit.

Further Information

If you have any concerns or questions about infection prevention and control or the advice given in this leaflet, please speak to the ward manager or nurse in charge.