Infection control – Advice for patients and visitors

Infections in hospital environments can sometimes be introduced and spread by patients and visitors. This leaflet explains how you can help the staff to reduce them and to provide a safe, clean environment in which to care for patients.

Advice for patients

- Always wash your hands after using the toilet or commode and before you eat. Please ask the nursing staff if you need help with this.

- Keep your room as tidy and clutter free as possible so that the cleaning staff can access all the surfaces and floor areas to clean properly. Please ask the nursing staff if you need help with this.

- If you have any wounds do not touch them or take off dressings yourself.

- If a member of staff needs to help you with your personal care or carry out a procedure (e.g. dressing a wound) do not be afraid to ask them if they have washed their hands. **It's OK to ask!**

- If you notice any areas of the ward that are not clean, report this immediately to the person in charge of the ward.

- Do not share personal items or equipment, particularly toiletries with other patients.

- Remind your visitors to clean their hands when entering and leaving the ward area and if they have helped you with your personal care.

- If you feel physically unwell please tell a member of nursing staff immediately, especially if you have had vomiting or diarrhoea.

Advice for visitors

Make sure you are in good health before visiting

- If you have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting, you should be symptom free for 48 hours before visiting.

- If you have flu or a very heavy cold, do not visit until the symptoms have subsided. (please speak with the ward manager if a visit is essential)

- If you have any open wounds, cuts etc cover them with a waterproof dressing.

Hand Hygiene

- Hand washing is the most effective way of preventing infections passing from person to person.

- To protect the patients and yourself please use the alcohol gel which can be found at the entrance to the wards, to clean your hands when you enter and leave the ward.

- If the patient you are visiting has Clostridium difficile, or if there is vomiting and diarrhoea on the ward, or if you have been dealing with bodily fluids please wash your hands at a sink using soap and warm water making sure you cover all the surfaces of hands.

General advice

- If you notice any areas of the ward that are not clean, report this immediately to the person in charge of the ward.

- Do not touch patient's wounds or dressings, if you do so accidentally please wash your hands immediately.

- Please check with the ward staff before bringing in perishable food for patients.

- Please do not go into the ward kitchen unless you have been given specific permission from staff.

- Talk to the ward manager if you have any concerns regarding infection control issues on the ward.

If you have any queries regarding infection control you can contact the Trust Infection Control Nurse, Helen Nicholls on 01322 625700 ext 5872 or email Helen.nicholls@oxleas.nhs.uk.