

## HAND HYGIENE

Hand Hygiene is the single most important way to prevent infection. Hands should be cleaned before and after visits with patients, after contact with blood or other potentially infectious material and after removing gloves or other protective clothing.

**Hand hygiene makes a difference!**

**Clean your hands often.**

**Visitors should clean their hands before and after visits with patients by-**

## HAND RUBS

- Alcohol hand rubs are available in most health care settings. Rubs are practical and an acceptable alternative to hand washing.
- Hand Rub Solution should come in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Hands should be rubbed together vigorously.

## Hand washing – Doing it right!

- Wet your hands: then apply soap.
- Rub the soap lather all over your hands.
- Wash all surfaces of your hands and fingers for 10 to 15 seconds. Be sure to get under your nails, around cuticles and between fingers.
- Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse.
- Dry your hands completely using a clean towel.
- Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands.



## OTHER INFECTION CONTROL PRIORITIES

- Cleaning standards are important to us and we conduct regular cleaning audits using the Department of Health Cleaning Standards for Victorian Hospitals.
- Our health care facility is environmentally conscious and our waste disposal meets waste guidelines.
- Staff health, including immunisation is a major priority so that our staff are not a risk to patients and they are protected from contracting infections from patients.

## VISITORS – REMEMBER

- Ask about special instructions - You may be asked not to bring personal items or flowers, which can harbour germs harmful to patients.
- Follow instructions on signs.
- Ask about rules for visiting – depending on how the patient's disease is spread, your visit may be discouraged or limited – **ASK THE STAFF.**
- Be understanding – these precautions may seem extreme, but remember, they help protect everyone.

### References:

NHMRC (2010) Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare. Commonwealth of Australia

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**RICPRAC**  
RURAL INFECTION CONTROL  
PRACTICE GROUP

# INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL



## *A Patient/Visitor Information Brochure*

Feel free to ask questions.  
Staff will be happy to talk with you about  
infection control.

Remember to clean your hands.  
Do this often and correctly

## INFECTION PREVENTION – OUR PRIORITY

- Infection control is the responsibility of management and all health care workers.
- Infection control achievements are made public through annual reports.
- All new staff undertake an infection prevention education session on commencement and are expected to attend ongoing updates.
- All equipment cleaning and processing is monitored according to the Australian standard.

## WHAT IS AN INFECTION?

An infection is an illness caused by “germs”, such as bacteria or viruses.

An infection is called “contagious or infectious” when it can be passed onto another person. The common cold is one example of a contagious disease.

By following a few simple steps we can reduce the risk of spreading germs between patients, staff and visitors.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Without some basic strategies, all patients and staff could be at risk of developing an infection whilst in a healthcare setting. Staff, patients and visitors all have an important role to play in preventing the spread of infection.

This risk is greatly reduced and managed by applying a few simple precautions.

## WHY PRECAUTIONS ARE USED

Infections like HIV, Hepatitis B & C can be passed on by contact with blood or some other potentially infectious materials.

A person may have a disease without appearing ill, allowing the illness to be passed onto others unknowingly.

It is not practical to test all people for all diseases all the time, so for everyone’s safety we use what is known as Standard precautions for all people, especially when dealing with blood or body fluids.



## STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Staff have to assume that any person may have an infectious illness, and so these precautions are used at all times with all patients irrespective of their illness.

Seeing a staff member use these precautions does not mean that you have a contagious disease, they are to be used to help protect all people within a healthcare facility.

Examples of standard precautions are:

- Hand Hygiene(washing)
- Gloves, aprons, gowns and eye protection when dealing with body fluids
- Cleaning equipment between use

## TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS

Some patients may need extra care taken if they have certain infections.

Transmission based precautions are used based on how the germ causing the infection is spread.

Transmission based precautions may include:

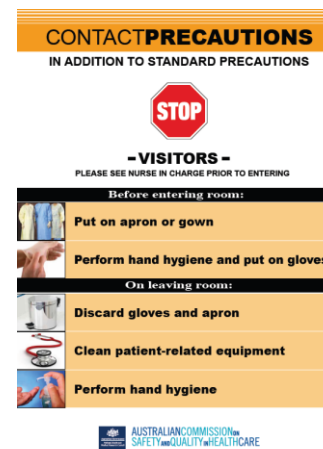
- Staff wearing masks, gloves or gowns when in your room
- Restricting what goes in and out of the room
- Being placed into isolation in a single room
- A single room with special air-conditioning

## ISOLATION

Isolation is a very effective way to prevent the spread of some germs, but it can be uncomfortable for the patients and visitors.

Visitors are still possible, but they must be educated before entering for the protection to work.

Good communication is important during this time, please speak to your nurse of any concerns.



**CONTACT PRECAUTIONS**  
IN ADDITION TO STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

**STOP**

**- VISITORS -**  
PLEASE SEE NURSE IN CHARGE PRIOR TO ENTERING

**Before entering room:**

- Put on apron or gown
- Perform hand hygiene and put on gloves

**On leaving room:**

- Discard gloves and apron
- Clean patient-related equipment
- Perform hand hygiene

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An example of the type of sign you may see on an isolation room