

# Infection Prevention as a Patient or Visitor

## Infection Prevention – Our Priority

- Infection Prevention is the responsibility of management and all healthcare workers within our hospital.
- Infection Prevention achievements are reported in the hospital Quality of Care Report.
- All new staff must attend a specific Infection Prevention orientation session and are expected to attend regular Infection Prevention education updates.
- All reusable instruments and equipment are cleaned and sterilised according to Australian Standards and compliance with standards is monitored.
- Single use policy. This ensures that 'single use' equipment is not re-processed/re-used.

## Who Could Be At Risk?

Infection Prevention is an essential part of quality health care. It recognises that patients can acquire infections while receiving health care and that these infections can be prevented by adopting appropriate infection prevention practices. Both patients and healthcare workers can be at risk of acquiring infections while they are in the health care setting.

## What Is An Infection?

An infection is an illness caused by “germs”. It is “contagious” or “infectious” when it can be passed from person to person. The common cold is an example of a contagious disease. By following a few simple steps we can reduce the risk of spreading germs to patients, staff and visitors.



## Why Are Precautions Used?

Infections such as HIV and hepatitis B and Hepatitis C can be passed through contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials. People infected with these viruses may not look sick. Because of this, standard precautions are applied to all patients every time contact with blood or body fluids is possible.

## What Are Standard Precautions?

Standard precautions are used at all times with all patients. The fact that your care givers use standard precautions does not necessarily mean that you have a contagious disease. But to protect you and themselves, they assume that every patient may have an infection. Standard precautions, which include hand hygiene and wearing protective clothing, are good ways to prevent the spread of these and other serious infections. Even visitors must follow standard precautions.

## What are Additional Precautions?

Some patients may need extra care if they have certain infections. Precautions are tailored to the particular germ causing the infection and how the germ is spread. Additional precautions may include:

- Single room, with en-suite or dedicated toilet.
- Dedicated patient equipment.
- Additional use of protective equipment or clothing such as masks and gowns.
- Restricted movement of patients and staff.
- Special air-conditioning requirements, (only for Airborne Precautions)

Please contact your ward nurse and/or ask to speak to the hospital Infection Prevention nurse if you would like more information about standard precautions, additional precautions or any other infection control issue.

## You Can Help Us Prevent Infections:

### Always wash your hands

- Before and after visiting patients
- After contact with blood
- After contact with other body substances
- After removing gloves or other protective clothing

### You can use clean your hand by using soap and water

- Wet your hands before you 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 the fingers.
- Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse.
- Pat dry your hands completely using a clean towel.
- Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

**Alcohol Hand Rubs/Gels:** These are available throughout all areas at Western Health. Rub the gel or solution so it comes in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Rub together until the product dries off.

If you would like more information contact Western Health Infection Prevention Unit:

**Footscray Hospital**

Phone: 03 8345 6783

**Sunshine Hospital**

Phone: 03 8345 0210

**Williamstown Hospital/Sunbury Day Hospital**

Mobile: 0419 311 375

**Western Health Infectious Diseases Physicians on call - Western Health Switch**

Phone: 03 8345 6666

**The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights** describes the rights of all people who use the Australian healthcare system. Copies of the charter in community languages are available near the main entrance of all Western Health hospitals, or ask a staff member or volunteer.

For more information, visit [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights)



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