

Information for Families and Visitors During an Outbreak

General Outbreak Management

Controlling outbreaks means doing everything possible to prevent the spread of infection to the patients/residents, families, and staff.

Visiting

During an outbreak situation, visitors may be limited if possible. Ask the nursing staff what would be best for your loved one. Visitors will need to follow any additional precautions (infection control measures) that are recommended.

Additional Precaution Rooms

These used to be called isolation rooms. At times these rooms involve shared accommodation with another patient/resident which may involve special arrangements. If you do need to enter the room, be sure to ask the nursing staff for help and follow their directions.

Hand Hygiene

Either wash your hands with soap and water or use the alcohol based hand sanitizer. This is the best way of preventing the spread of infection.

❖ How do you hand wash effectively?

- a) use lots of warm running water
- b) wet hands and apply soap
- c) vigorously rub soap over all surfaces of hands for 20 to 30 seconds
- d) pay special attention to fingernails and space between fingers and thumbs
- e) rinse well under warm, running water
- f) pat hands dry with a paper towel, avoid rubbing or over-drying
- g) use paper towel to shut off water tap
- h) use lotion to moisturize if hands are dry

❖ What about alcohol based hand sanitizers?

Hand sanitizers that contain alcohol are a convenient and effective way to perform hand hygiene. These are not to be used if your hands are visibly soiled. To use this product effectively you should do the following:

- a) cover all surfaces of your hands with the hand sanitizer
- b) rub all sides of the hands and between fingers
- c) pay special attention to around fingernails
- d) rub hands for 20 to 30 seconds until all the sanitizer has evaporated

Respiratory Etiquette

When you cough or sneeze be sure to cover your mouth and nose. Use disposable tissues if possible. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you do not have a tissue available. Be sure to perform hand hygiene.

Personal Belongings

If your family member or loved one was placed on additional precautions, some belongings may be sent home, for example plush toys or books that the resident has had contact with. Wash and dry these items using warm or hot water temperatures. Steam cleaning of upholstered furniture may be required.

Resident Outings and Scheduled Activities

Please check with the nursing staff if you want to take your loved one outside the facility. Scheduled entertainment and activities may be cancelled during an outbreak. Please check with nursing staff for information on any planned event.