

## How does Ashgate Hospice reduce the risk of infection?

Infection control is an important priority at Ashgate Hospice. We recognise the key role played by staff, patients and visitors in reducing the risk of infection and making your stay more comfortable. We have a number of ways of reducing the risk of infection which include:

- Training staff to be aware of the risk of infection so you can be monitored for the first signs of infection.
- When an infection is suspected, sending specimens to be tested so that treatment can be started as soon as possible.
- Putting special precautions in place when nursing patients with infections to reduce the chance of cross infection.
- Having a regular programme of infection control education and training for all staff.
- Ensuring that infection control practices and standards are being met through a programme of regular checks.
- Keeping the environment clean.
- Making sure we only use clean equipment when caring for you.
- Providing you with food and drink that complies with food hygiene regulations.

### Contact

Ashgate Hospice,  
Ashgate Road,  
Old Brampton,  
Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire S42 7JD  
01246 568801  
info@ashgatehospice.org.uk  
www.ashgatehospice.org.uk

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# Healthcare Associated Infection

## How you can help reduce it

Information for patients and visitors



## Infection control is everyone's responsibility. This leaflet aims to help patients and their visitors understand the importance of preventing infection.

### What is a healthcare associated infection?

Healthcare associated infection (HCAI) is any infection that a patient may get during treatment for an illness. The infection may be acquired as a result of nursing, medical or surgical treatment in hospital, in a GP surgery, hospice or in the community.

Most infections are caused by a person's normal bacteria which live on various parts of the body without causing any harm. It is only when the bacteria move and enter other susceptible areas, for example wounds, through a urinary catheter, skin sores or injection sites, that infection may occur and enter the body more easily.

Sometimes infections can come from other patients, healthcare workers or the environment where the care is provided and this is called cross infection.

### Why do patients get an infection?

It is impossible to completely eliminate the chances of a sick person acquiring an infection. When you are ill you are more vulnerable to getting an infection. This may be because of the illness you have or because of the drugs you have been given to treat the illness. Also if you have a wound, or urinary catheter, infection can enter your body more easily.

### What can I do to reduce the risk of acquiring an infection?

The most important way of preventing infection is through cleanliness. This includes cleanliness of your hands, your body, your clothing or the environment:

- Wash your hands frequently – especially before eating and drinking and after going to the toilet.

- A daily shower, bath, or full wash not only reduces the risk of infection but will also make you feel better.
- It is important to clean your teeth and if you have a sore mouth to use a mouthwash.
- Try and change your night wear regularly especially if it gets soiled. Arrange for your visitors to do your washing but if this is not possible, speak to your nurse.

### How can I help reduce the risk of cross infection?

- Wear slippers or shoes when walking around the hospice. This keeps your feet clean so that bacteria are not transferred from your feet to your bed.
- Please do not enter another patient's room without asking a nurse first because they may have special infection control precautions in place that must be followed.
- Please do not sit on other patients' beds as this makes it easier for bacteria to spread.
- Bacteria need to be able to enter your body to cause an infection, so it is important to wash your hands before eating and drinking. If you have a dressing, make sure it stays in the correct place; if it becomes loose inform your nurse.
- Do not use shared equipment (for example toilet, bath, commode or wheelchair) if it is not clean. Ask your nurse to have it cleaned so that you can use it.
- Keep your bedside tidy and clutter free so that the housekeeping staff can undertake their routine cleaning.
- If you are feeling unwell with symptoms of a cough, cold, diarrhoea and vomiting or any other infection and are due to attend a Day Hospice session or outpatient's appointment, please let the staff know so that your session/appointment can be cancelled. It is recommended that you do not attend your appointment until you have recovered. If you have had symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting you must be symptom free for 48 hours before attending your next visit to the hospice.

### How can my carers at Ashgate Hospice reduce the risk of my getting an infection?

- All staff and volunteers providing you with care or support must clean their hands before and after contact with you. If their hands already look clean they will use alcohol-based hand rub which is available at the entrance to your bedroom, in the outpatient's department and in the Day Hospice. If their hands are not clean they will use liquid soap and running water.
- Staff will wear gloves and aprons when handling blood and body fluids, and they will change their gloves and wash their hands before giving care to a second patient.
- Equipment will either be cleaned before use with each patient or will be for single patient use.

### How can my visitors reduce the risk of me getting an infection?

- Ask your visitors not to come and see you if they have coughs, colds, diarrhoea, vomiting, rashes or any other infection. They should go to their own GP for help and check with your nurse before visiting you.
- Ask your visitors to use the alcohol-based hand rub at the entrance to your room when they arrive and again when they leave. If they are helping with your care, they should use the alcohol-based hand rub before and after this care.
- Ask your visitors carefully to wash and dry any fruit they bring in for you.
- Ask your visitors not to sit on your bed.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your nurse.