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## Together we can fight infection...

*'Protecting patients from infection is the responsibility of everyone - including staff and visitors'*

Providing high-quality services in a safe and clean environment is a number one priority for Addenbrooke's - this includes helping everyone understand what we can do together to fight infection in hospitals and protect your health.

We hope this practical information will be helpful.

### **About MRSA...**

People in hospital worry most about catching MRSA, which is a type of bacterium (bug) that is less easily treated with common antibiotics. People can have it on their skin (called colonisation) without it causing any problems. Other people can get more serious infections with it.

At Addenbrooke's, we are serious about preventing all infections (including MRSA) especially in those patients who are most at risk. These include those who have intravenous (IV) lines, wounds, or are particularly susceptible to infections (some people who have cancer, the very old and very young).

MRSA can be treated with the newest antibiotics but often the body's own immune system is the best cure. If someone has 'just' a colonisation, we can often use 'lotions and potions' to clear the MRSA. If you are worried you might have MRSA, or already know you have MRSA and would like more information, ask a member of staff. We also have some questions and answers about MRSA on our website.

### **What can you expect?**

#### **Cleaning:**

You can expect your hospital environment to be kept clean and tidy. We employ trained staff to clean every day both our ward areas and other areas of the hospital. The cleaning of clinical areas is overseen by senior clinical nurses (our 'modern matrons'). If you think something needs cleaning, ask a member of staff - they should attend to it as soon as possible.

### **Hand cleansing:**

There is alcohol hand rub at the entrance of all wards and bays and by each bed. This is for the use of all staff, patients and visitors. It is quicker and easier to use than soap when your hands are not actually soiled but might be carrying 'hidden' bugs. Please wash your hands first if they are soiled.

### **Well-trained staff:**

To keep up with the latest guidelines for protecting patients, our staff are constantly being reminded of effective ways of preventing infection including how to care for difficult wounds and IV lines.

### **Aprons and gloves:**

Staff should be using aprons and gloves as 'personal protection' when they are changing dressings or giving patient care - this protects them, their uniforms and you.

### **Reduced risk by segregating patients:**

When we know patients are at risk of serious infection, we can use our side rooms or smaller (cohort) bays to segregate them. These areas are barrier nursed. Please follow any instructions given.

### **Antibiotics and treatment:**

We use antibiotics according to well-established guidelines - sometimes to prevent infection (before and after some operations) and sometimes to treat a known infection. We want to use the right ones at the right time to ensure they help you when you need them. Ask your healthcare staff for further information.

### **Additional deep cleaning of wards:**

When we consider it might help prevent infection, we will close down areas of wards for enhanced cleaning. We apologise for any disruption this might cause.

## **What can you, as patients and visitors, do to reduce infection?**

*'There are many simple things we can all do to fight infection'*

Infections aren't fussy about who spreads them. We all need to be careful. Here are some simple things you can do:

- **'Leave infections at home'** - when you are a visitor, don't bring infections into hospital. If you have had an infection, stay away until you are completely better. Cover up any open wounds/cuts.
- **'Wash and cleanse your hands carefully and often'** Wash your hands if they are soiled. Use the alcohol hand rub when you enter and leave a ward and use the bedside rub after close contact with patients. There are signs showing you how to use them - or ask staff. Let staff know when the supplies are running low.
- **'Don't clutter'** Help staff to keep areas clean by not bringing in lots of clutter and by taking away things that are not required.
- **'When you are a visitor'** - don't sit on the beds - they are for patients only.
- **'Remind your staff'** Staff won't mind if you ask them if they have washed and cleansed their hands - they should do this before and after every contact with patients.
- **'Tell us about problems'** Report any problems (eg spillages) to ward staff. Our senior clinical nurses (modern matrons) have responsibility for ensuring ward areas are hygienic.
- **'Ask us for advice'** - if you are worried, please ask us - we will do our best to find the answers for you.

## **Who can you ask for advice and information?**

Infections worry all of us and they can be complicated to understand.

If you have any questions about infections in hospitals, please ask your ward staff who can find the answers out for you. You can also contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) based in our Information Centre, which is right by main reception, or call them on extension 2756 (or 01223 216 756).

We shall keep our public website up to date with useful information about protecting you from infection. You can help yourself to this or ask our staff to help you find it.