

# While you are in isolation

## What is isolation?

Sometimes it is necessary to move patients to a single room (which may have its own toilet and washing facilities) or to a dedicated bay in a ward (sometimes called a cohort bay). This is often referred to as 'isolation'.

Being in isolation allows healthcare staff to reduce the risk of spreading any infection to you or other patients. Staff may wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE) i.e. masks, eye protection, gloves, aprons dependent on the risk and reason for being isolated.

The staff will explain this to you.

***Please feel free to ask staff if you would like more information about any aspects of your care.***

## Why do I need to be isolated?

Bacteria and viruses can cause a variety of human infections. These can sometimes cause problems in hospitals; therefore, special care is needed to reduce the risk of spreading infections to other patients and staff.

Some patients are more at risk of infection because of their health condition and need to be in isolation to help protect them from catching infections.

We understand this may be difficult for you, but staff will do their best to make your stay in hospital as comfortable as possible.

## How is infection Spread?

The risk of acquiring or spreading infection can be higher while you are in hospital. This is because of the frequent contact you will have with healthcare staff and the hospital environment and equipment. Other patients may also act as a source of infection.

Contaminated (Unclean) hands are the most common way that infection is spread.

To prevent this, you will see healthcare staff cleaning their hands (washing with soap and water or using hand rub).

## Can I leave the isolation Room?

This will depend on why you are in isolation. The Infection Prevention Control Team will have advised the ward staff of any extra care that is required, should you need to visit any other departments, or it's safe to leave the room for fresh air.

Being in isolation will not affect the care you receive.

## Can I have visitors?

Yes, you can have visitors. Visitors must first speak to the nurse looking after you before visiting and especially if they are planning to bring children. The nurse will advise on any extra care or additional precautions visitors may need to take before entering your room.

If visitors are having close contact with you, for example helping with washing dressing, then visitors should check with healthcare staff on correct protective equipment i.e. gloves and apron.

Visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand rub:

- Before and after visiting you.
- If helping a patient with their meal
- If helping a patient use the toilet/ commode (hand washing with soap and water preferable)

## Will my discharge be delayed?

Usually there will be no delay if you are returning to your own home. Being in an isolation room should not usually stop you going into a nursing or residential home.

If you need to be transferred to another hospital, you may experience a slight delay as the hospital may want to place you in a single room and this could take time to organise.

## What happens when I get home?

When you go home you should live life as normally as possible. It is very unusual that any special care will be required when you go home. However, if any special care is necessary the ward staff will discuss this with you before you are discharged. After you have gone home you can contact your GP for further advice if needed.

## It's OK Ask

If you are concerned about hand hygiene, don't be afraid to ask health care staff treating you if they have cleaned their hands. Remember it's OK to ask.

## Further Information

Visit NHS for general information about infection prevention and control

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Alternatively, you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**, who can listen to your concerns, suggestions of queries and direct you to further information.

Call **0118 960 5027**

Email [bht@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:bht@berkshire.nhs.uk)



Scan me

 [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/infection](http://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/infection)

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