

# Receiving treatment in isolation

## Advice for patients and families

In some cases when we're caring for you, we may need to treat you in isolation both for your wellbeing and the safety of others.

### What is isolation?

Treatment in isolation means moving you to a separate room (which may have its own toilet and washing facilities) or a bay in a ward, sometimes called a cohort bay. We often refer to this as isolation.

Being in isolation allows our staff to reduce the risk of spreading any infection to you or other patients. Staff may wear gloves, aprons, goggles or masks depending on the reason you're being isolated.

If you have any questions about your care, please feel free to ask our staff.

### Why do I need to be in isolation?

Bacteria and viruses can cause a variety of infections, meaning we need to take special care to reduce the risk of spreading infections to other patients and staff.

You may also be more at risk of infection because of a health condition or your age, and need to be in isolation to protect you. Being in isolation will not affect the type, or quality of care you receive.

### When can I leave the isolation room?

This will depend on why you're in isolation. Our Infection, Prevention and Control Team will advise the ward staff caring for you if it's safe for you to leave the room for fresh air, or to visit another department.

### How is infection spread?

Your wellbeing is our top priority and we want you to be safe when you visit us. However, the risk of spreading or catching an infection can be higher while you're in hospital, because of the frequent contact you'll have with staff and hospital equipment. Other patients may also be a source of infection.

Contaminated hands are the most common way that infection is spread. To prevent this, you'll see our staff washing their hands, wearing gloves and using alcohol hand rub. Please ask for our general infection control leaflet for further information on hand hygiene.

## Can I have visitors while I'm in isolation?

Yes you can have visitors while you're in isolation. Visitors must first speak to the nurse looking after you before visiting, especially if they're bringing children with them.

Visitors must wash their hands with soap and water before and after visiting you. They should also wear gloves and aprons if they have close contact with you such as helping you wash and dress.

The nurse will advise your visitors on any other things they need to do before entering your room.

## Will discharge be delayed?

Usually there's no delay if you're returning to home. Being in an isolation room shouldn't stop you going into a nursing or residential home, where even if you have a single room, you should be able to mix freely with other residents.

If you need to be transferred to another hospital, you may experience a slight delay as they make arrangements for your care.

## What happens when I get home?

When you're ready to go home, it's unlikely that you'll need any further special care.

If you do need particular arrangements, our ward staff will discuss this with you before you're discharged. After you have gone home you can contact your GP if you have any more questions.

## Further advice

You can find further advice from the NHS on how to prevent the spread of infections.

[www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/infections](http://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/infections)

**How to  
contact us**

**If you need to contact us  
or require further information...**

**Call: 0118 960 5140**

**Email: [infection.control@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:infection.control@berkshire.nhs.uk)**

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

