



Infection control: Patient and visitor information

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What do you do to try to prevent the spread of infections at St Luke's?

- Throughout the hospice, we use a cleaning product which is proven to kill bacteria, viruses and spores. We have strict cleaning rotas in place and we conduct audits to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness are maintained. We can give you more information about this if you would like; just ask one of the nursing staff.
- Staff also undergo mandatory infection control training, including hand hygiene, and are expected to follow the guidance in St Luke's Infection Prevention and Control Policy and Procedures.
- Our patients are screened for various causes of infection when they are admitted, and we monitor patients for signs of infection throughout their stay with us. If patients begin to show symptoms of infection, we have a range of measures that can be implemented to treat the patient while protecting their loved ones and our staff. This could include using protective clothing (PPE), asking patients to remain in their rooms (isolation), and cleaning patients' rooms more often.

What is PPE?

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) refers to wearable items that are intended to protect the wearer from becoming infected. This works by creating a physical barrier for the wearer. For example, for an infection that spreads through the air like the flu, staff will wear a surgical mask to prevent them from inhaling infectious particles.
- We have a range of protective items which are used depending on the type of infection we suspect you have or that has been confirmed.
- You may see us using: disposable latex-free gloves; disposable aprons; blue surgical masks; disposable shoe covers; eye goggles; face masks known as FFP3 masks; and disposable gowns.

Which PPE will you use and why?

Depending on the infection, staff may wear a variety of protective items. We will explain to you what we are wearing and why and will be happy to answer any questions you or your visitors might have about this.

Can I have visitors if I have an infection?

We aim to facilitate visiting in almost all circumstances and understand the importance of regular contact with loved ones. However, visiting can pose an additional risk so we ask that you discuss any visits with us beforehand. All visitors under 12 years of age need to be discussed with a senior member of our clinical team so please speak to the Nurse In Charge in this instance.

Will my visitors have to wear PPE?

Depending on the infection, we might ask your visitors to wear protective items to try to minimise the risk of them contracting the infection too.

What if I am immunocompromised and I need protection from outside infections?

We will know if this is the case, and we will “reverse barrier nurse” you. This means we – and your visitors – will wear PPE in order to protect you from possibly contracting an infection that we may be carrying without knowing.

Why am I being asked to stay in my room (in isolation)?

If we believe that you have an infection that could pass to other people, we will ask you to stay in your room and our staff will wear PPE when caring for you.

How long will I need to stay in my room for?

This depends on the infection and how long you will be infectious for. Some infections will resolve quickly on their own, whereas others require treatment and take longer to resolve. We understand that asking people to stay in their room is disruptive and can be difficult, so we will only ask you to do this when it is absolutely necessary for as short a time as possible. We can discuss this with you in more detail at any time if you would like us to.

What if I don't want to stay in my room or my visitors do not want to use PPE?

We will always work with you to make your time as comfortable and pleasant as we possibly can. However, in some circumstances, there are measures we have to insist on to keep you, your visitors and our staff protected from infections. If you are struggling to stay in your room, please speak to one of the nursing or medical staff as soon as possible to discuss this in more detail.

IPC closure

Sometimes we may need to close the Inpatient Centre to admissions and visitors. This could be for a number of reasons and only ever as a last resort. The nursing staff will talk to you and your visitors about this in more detail at that time.

I have more questions that aren't answered in this leaflet. Who can I talk to?

Please talk to a member of the nursing or medical staff as soon as possible and let them know that you have some questions about your infection status and/or any measures we've put in place. They will make time to come and talk to you as soon as possible and will do their best to give you the information that you need.