

Hospital Isolation Precautions

What is isolation?

“Isolation” is a term that means “keeping apart.” For all patients in our facilities, hospital staff follow strict rules to prevent the spread of germs, especially when they come in contact with blood or body fluids. These are called **standard precautions**.

Because you have an infection that can spread easily, hospital staff protect patients, staff, and visitors by taking **special precautions** based on the type of infection you might have. These include:

- 1 **Airborne precautions**—For those who have germs that spread through the air (for example, chickenpox, measles, herpes zoster, or tuberculosis)
- 2 **Contact precautions**—For those who have germs that spread by touch (such as MRSA or diarrhea)
- 3 **Droplet precautions** —For those who have germs that spread by contact with droplets from your mouth or nose (for example, influenza, mumps, or pertussis —also called “whooping cough”)

What about visitors?

All visitors need to sanitize their hands before entering and when leaving your room. You will notice that there is hand sanitizer located outside of each room and inside the room. Please remind visitors to use it when they come into and leave your room.

There are additional requirements for those who come to visit you if you are in:

- **Airborne isolation**—Visitors typically need to have been vaccinated or have an immunity for your illness. They also may be asked to wear a mask while in your room. On rare occasions, visitors may be restricted.
- **Contact and droplet isolation**—Visitors should **NOT touch** your dressings—bed clothes, bandages, or gown—or any items you touch. Some types of contact isolation requires washing hands with soap and water. Check with your nurse.

See page 2 to learn which precautions are required for each type of isolation.



What are the special precautions?



Handwashing: Anyone entering or leaving your room needs to clean their hands. Use soap and water or the hand sanitizer located both inside and outside of your room.



Gloves: Staff (and sometimes visitors) need to wear gloves when they touch you, your body fluids, or surfaces in your room. Remove gloves and wash hands when leaving the room.



Gown: Staff (and sometimes visitors) need to wear a gown to protect clothing from germs. Remove the gown and wash hands when leaving the room.



Mask: Staff (and sometimes visitors) need to wear a special mask to keep from breathing germs in the air. If you need to leave the room, you may need to wear a mask to keep from infecting others.



Isolation sign: There will be a sign on your door to let staff and visitors know how to prevent the spread of germs.



Vaccine: Visitors and staff must either have had a vaccine or have immunity to the disease.



Eye protection: Staff might wear special goggles to protect them from germs in the air or from contact with bodily fluids.

Standard Precautions — Used only when needed



Isolation Precautions — Used for patients with contagious illnesses

1 Airborne Isolation Precautions

Airborne isolation is for those with any infection spread through the air.

NOTE: You will be in a room that has negative air pressure to prevent air inside your room from being pushed out into the hallway. Your door will have to stay closed.



2 Contact Precautions

Contact precautions are used when you have a harmful germ that can spread when people touch you or things in your room.



3 Droplet Precautions

Droplet precautions are used when you have an illness that can be spread by droplets from your mouth or nose when you speak, cough, or sneeze, and when people touch surfaces in your room.



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