



Critical care patients are more susceptible to infections

Hospital infections can be introduced and spread by patients and visitors.

If patients pick up an infection, it can cause additional pain and anxiety. It may result in additional treatments and keep them in hospital longer.

We all know that.....

Reducing the risk of infections is a top priority and we will take every step possible to keep healthcare associated infections to a minimum. The healthcare team will do everything they can to maintain the safety and well-being of your family member or friend while they are in hospital.....

but we need your help too

We need you to fight infections

How can you help fight infection?

This leaflet explains how you can help the staff to reduce Hospital infections and provide a clean and safe environment in which to care for patients. By following the points in this leaflet, you can help us to prevent vulnerable individuals picking up an infection and prevent the spread of infections.

What can you do?



Before visiting family and friends in Critical Care please make sure you are in good health.



If you have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting, you should be symptom-free for at least 48 hours before your visit.



If you have a heavy cold, flu or a chest infection, do not visit until the symptoms go away.

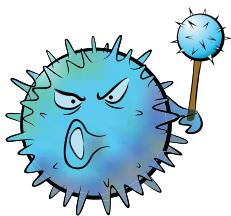


If you have any open wounds, a clean, waterproof dressing should cover them.

People with Infections

Have you had contact with people with infections? Some infectious conditions, for example chicken pox, shingles and mumps may be a problem to patients, especially adults with a vulnerable immune system.

If you have been in contact with somebody who has an infection it is best if you do not visit other patients. If unsure, please contact the ward staff before you visit.



Clean hands protect against infection

The single most important measure in helping to prevent the spread of infection is good hand hygiene and that is where patients and visitors can help.

Always clean your hands when entering the unit and again when you leave. Sinks and gels will be located close to entrance/exits to allow you to be able to do this.

What to do if you have sensitive skin



If you are unable to use the soap or gel provided please inform one of the critical care staff as alternatives can be provided to ensure you are still able to visit the unit.

How to protect yourself and others



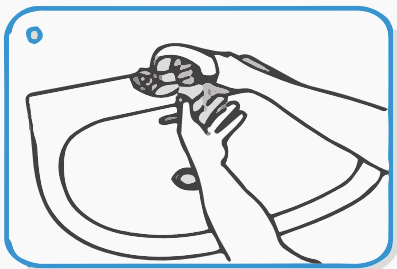
Clean your hands regularly.
Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.
Use hand-rub if you don't have immediate access to soap and water.

How do I wash my hands properly?



Washing your hands properly using the instructions on the following page should be done for about the length of time it takes to sing the song "Happy Birthday" twice.

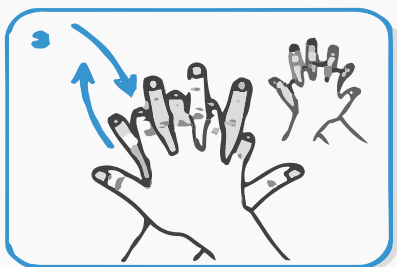




Wet hands with water



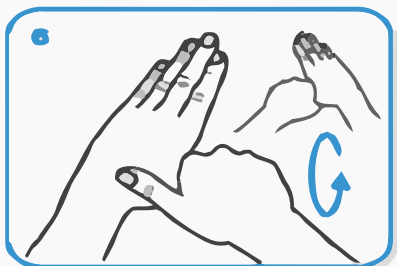
apply enough
hand



right palm over left dorsum
with interlaced fingers
and vice versa



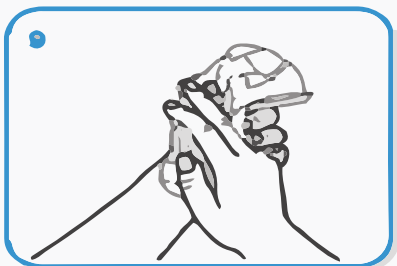
palm to palm
int



rotational rubbing of left thumb
clasped in right palm
and vice versa



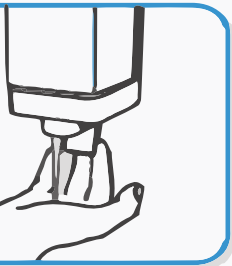
rotational rubbing
and forward
fingers of
palm and



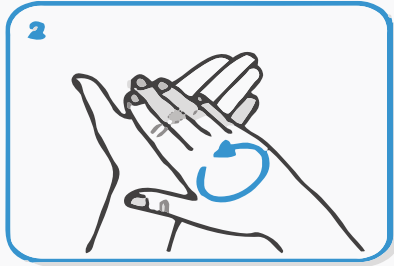
dry thoroughly with a single
use towel



use towel



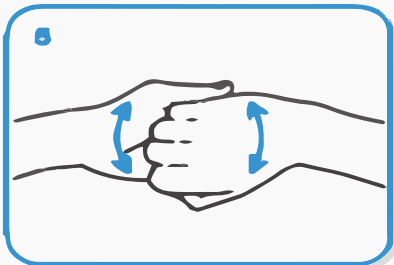
h soap to cover all
d surfaces.



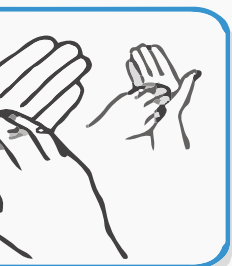
Rub hands palm to palm



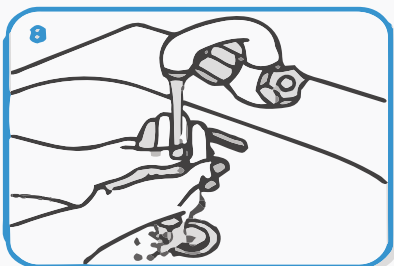
alm with fingers
terlaced



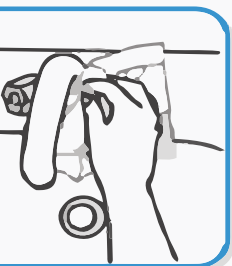
backs of fingers to opposing
palms with fingers interlocked



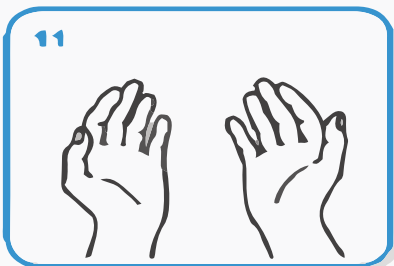
bbing, backwards
nds with clasped
right hand in left
nd vice versa.



Rinse hands with water



to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

What to wear when visiting



We ask that you do not visit in clearly "dirty" work clothes for example work boots and overalls.

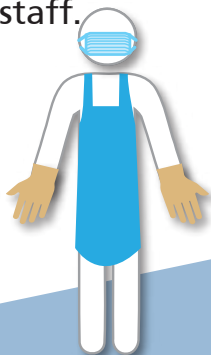


In addition we ask that if you work in another healthcare setting e.g. a nursing home, that you do not wear your uniform when visiting the critical care unit.

Protective clothing

Generally it is not necessary for visitors to wear protective clothing, but on occasion this may happen. This could be to protect the patient or if they are contagious it may be to protect you.

You will notice when you are in the unit that staff wear plastic aprons and gloves when dealing with the patients. This is done to reduce the risks of infection and to protect both patients and staff.



Sitting at the bedside

Visiting someone in a critical care unit can be very stressful as it is a technical environment, it's normal to feel this way.

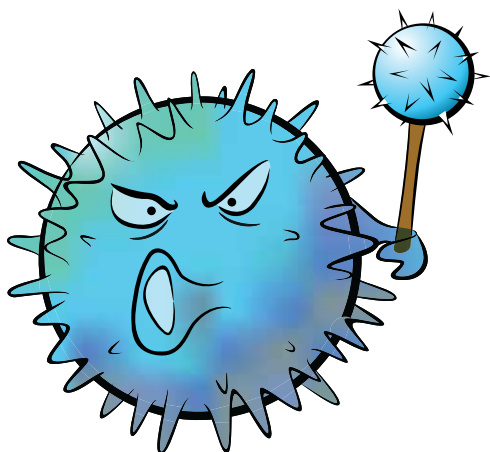
We do encourage family and friends to touch their relatives as this has been shown to be beneficial.

We do however request that you refrain from touching wounds, dressings, lines or tubes/drains.

We also ask that you do not sit on the patient's bed, equipment or bins and please do not bring food or drink into the unit for personal consumption.



Remember if you have any questions please approach a member of health care staff who will be happy to help.



This leaflet has been produced by the Service Improvement Lead Nurses of the West Yorkshire Critical Care & Major Trauma Operational Delivery Networks in collaboration with colleagues from Infection Prevention & Control Services across the acute hospitals in West Yorkshire.

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More information for critical care patients, relatives and carers is available on the West Yorkshire Critical Care Network website
<http://www.wyccn.org>



West Yorkshire

Critical Care & Major Trauma

Operational Delivery Networks