St Vincent's

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of Charity

StV

Working together to prevent infection

Information for Patients and Visitors

Remember

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your nurse or doctor.

Use the space below to write down your questions.

Tips to remember

- Always place used tissues immediately into the waste bin or bag.

- Wear slippers or shoes whenever you are out of bed.

- Make sure staff clean their hands before touching your wound or intravenous drip.

All staff are educated in infection control policies and appreciate your right to enquire.

As a visitor, how can I help?

Do not visit if you know you have an infectious illness such as a cold, measles, chicken pox or gastroenteritis.

Check with staff for any special precautions such as wearing a mask or washing your hands.

Clean your hands with alcohol hand rub before and after visiting.

(NHMRC 2010 Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Helathcare)

Prepared by the Infection Control Service April 2012

Mission
Our health service is based on and driven by our quest for:
Compassion – Justice – Human Dignity – Excellence – Unity

Together we can fight infection

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

St Vincent's has in place strict policies and procedures to help prevent infections occurring.

What is an infection?

An infection can occure when germs or micro-organisms multiply in the body and cause a general illness or a localised effect such as pus in a wound.

How is an infection spread?

Infection can spread if:

- The germ is transmitted from person to person or from the environment to a person (e.g. on the hands of staff, patients, visitors).

- There is an area of that person's body (e.g.: a wound) where the germ can enter, survive and multiply.

- The germ comes into contact with a person who is prone to infection.

What can you do?

Everyone , including healthcare workers, patients and visitors, can help prevent and control healthcare-associated infections:

- The most effective way to prevent infections is to clean your hands by washing with soap and water or by using an alcohol based hand rub.

- Do not be afraid to ask a healthcare worker if they have cleaned their hands.

- If the IV, lines, tubes or drains inserted into your body become red, swollen or painful report it to your nurse/doctor.

- Inform you nurse/doctor if your room or equipment has not been cleaned properly.

When should I clean my hands?

- After going to the toilet.

- Before and after eating.

- After coughing or sneezing.

- After touching your operation wound/ dressing.

Why do infections still occur?

Despite precautions infections sometimes occur in hospitals. This can be for a number of reasons:

- When people become ill their defences against infection are often lowered

- Patients often have wounds or require tubes to be inserted for various treatments. This can cause some of the body's normal barriers against infection (intact skin) to be broken

- Germs that normally live harmlessly on your own skin can sometimes cause infection if they contaminate your wounds or mucous membranes

- Hands are home to many germs and are a common way in which germs are spread

- The hospital environment houses large volumes of equipment and supplies that are handled by many people.