

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

For infection prevention & control purposes and to keep you safe and well visitors are requested **not** to:

- Visit you if they are unwell
- Sit on your bed or use the patient toilets.
- Touch your wounds, or any medical devices, drips or catheters.

How can I find out more?

Contact the Infection Prevention & Control Department on:
Stoke Mandeville Hospital Tel: 01296 315337
Public Health England Tel: 0344 225 3861 (option 4, option 1)
NHS Choices Website: <http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

Follow us on Twitter @buckshealthcare

Contact Screening (what to expect)

Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or alternative format of this leaflet please call
Infection Prevention & Control 01296 315337

Why do we screen for organisms?

It is sometimes necessary to take swabs to check for the presence of certain organisms e.g. MRSA as part of your hospital stay or visit. This is called screening and enables us to identify if you are carrying these organisms. It will also allow us to provide you with the correct treatment and help to prevent the transmission of organisms to other patients and healthcare workers. We do not routinely screen everybody, however this is becoming more common and is based on a risk assessment undertaken by the Infection Prevention & Control Team.

How are organisms spread?

Organisms can spread in a variety of ways including touch via hands and contaminated surfaces including patient care equipment. Hand washing by healthcare workers is essential in preventing the spread of organisms. You will also see healthcare workers wearing gloves and aprons whilst caring for some patients in hospital.

What is contact screening?

It is common for people to carry certain organisms without them knowing or becoming unwell and this is called colonisation. We do not always know who is carrying the organisms until we screen them. If we identify a patient who is carrying a particular organism we often 'contact screen' other patients who have been cared for in the same ward area as a precaution. Contact screening means taking swabs from contacts to identify if an organism is present. A risk assessment will be undertaken to decide this.

What organisms am I being screened for?

There are a number of organisms we may screen for. This will depend on the one you may have been exposed to. You will be told by the healthcare worker screening you which organisms we are looking for.

Will I need any preparation before I am screened?

You do not need any preparation for the screening process and it can be carried out in your ward area. Your privacy and dignity will be respected.

Will I be asked to sign a consent form or is verbal consent needed?

The healthcare worker carrying out your screen will inform you of the process and you do not need to sign a consent form.

How will I be screened?

A nurse or healthcare worker will usually perform the screen. The process should only take a couple of minutes and may involve taking swabs from your nose, throat, groin, rectum (bottom) and wounds or other abnormal skin areas if these are present, although this may vary depending on the organisms we are screening for. If you have a catheter we may take a specimen of urine. The process should be painless.

What happens after I have been screened?

Following screening the swabs will be sent to the laboratory. Your results are not usually available for at least 48 hours, and the length of time may depend on the organisms you are being screened for. If your result is positive you will be told by a member of staff. You will then be offered further advice and information to support you. You may not automatically be told the result if it is negative, but you can ask a healthcare worker to check for you.

Will my care or treatment be affected whilst I am waiting for the result?

No. Your care and treatment will continue as normal whilst you are waiting for your results.