

# Preventing the spread of infections

In addition to our usual practices, transmission-based precautions (safety actions) are meant to stop the spread of infectious germs between patients, staff and visitors. The type of precaution depends on the type of germ and how it is spread. All patients who are on transmission-based precautions have to stay in their room. This requirement is meant to be a safety measure for the patient, staff and visitors on the unit. There will be a sign posted outside of your room with instructions about the type of precautions needed.

## Contact precautions

Patients on contact precautions have an infectious germ that can be spread by person-to-person contact or from items in the person's room. All staff members and visitors should clean their hands with a 15-second liquid soap scrub, or with the hospital alcohol foam. Gloves and a yellow gown are to be worn before going into the patient's room. When leaving the room, the gown and gloves are to be placed in the trash bag by the door, followed by good hand-cleaning practices.

## Droplet precautions

Patients on droplet precautions have infectious germs that can be spread by coughing and sneezing droplets in the air. All staff members and visitors should clean their hands with a 15-second liquid soap scrub or with the hospital alcohol foam, and wear a surgical mask when going into the room.

When leaving the room, the mask is to be placed in the trash by the door, followed by good hand-cleaning practices.

## Airborne precautions

Patients on airborne precautions have germs that can spread through the air. These patients should be in a room with special air circulation and with the door closed. All staff members and visitors must clean their hands with a 15-second liquid soap scrub or with the hospital alcohol foam. Staff members must wear an N95 mask before going into the room. Visitors should also wear an N95 mask. The N95 mask should fit well. The mask should draw in towards the mouth when you inhale. Nursing staff can assist you, if needed.

## Visitors

All visitors must check in at the nurses' station for directions before visiting a patient who is on transmission-based precautions. Any visitors who feel sick, or who have been around others who may have the chicken pox, a cold or any other easily spread illness, should not visit. Visitors may visit as long as they are able to comply with the isolation precautions.

## Infection prevention related to devices

On occasion, patients require special devices, such as central venous lines or urinary catheters, to ensure the best care is being provided. Devices can increase the risk for

infection; however, there are several practices that can be used to lessen the risk for infection.

## **What is a central venous line?**

An intravenous catheter (tube) that is placed in large blood vessels, often ending near the heart. They are most commonly used for hemodialysis, chemotherapy and to administer special medications that would damage smaller vessels.

## **What is a urinary catheter?**

A catheter is a tube that is inserted into the bladder. This tube will ensure complete emptying of the bladder.

## **What to expect if you have a device**

Practices that have been established through research are combined together into what Baptist Health calls a “bundle.” Below are bundle practices:

1. Team members will assess (look at) the device as often as every two hours.
2. Every day, team members will partner with you to discuss if you still need the device.
3. Patients with central venous lines will receive a daily bath with chlorhexidine (CHG) wipes.
4. Patients with urinary catheters will receive daily care that includes the use of bath wipes for your genital area as well as the catheter itself.