

GERMS AND INFECTION

The purpose of Grace Health's Infection Control Program is to prevent the spread of germs. Germs and infections can travel from patient to patient, from patient to staff and visitors, or from staff to patients and visitors. This information sheet tells you about guidelines to reduce your risk of infection while you are in this hospital or other health care facilities. If your family or friends are feeling ill, please ask them not to come to the hospital to visit you.

CLEAN YOUR HANDS

The most important step to prevent the spread of germs and infections is hand washing. Wash your hands often. Be sure to wash your hands each time you:

- Touch any blood or body fluids
- Touch dressings or other soiled items
- Use the bathroom

If you are coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose, clean your hands often. Before you eat, always clean your hands.

Here's how you should clean your hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands and wrists with warm water.
- Use soap. Work up a good lather, and rub hard for 15 seconds or longer (or just sing the "Happy Birthday" song one time through).
- Rinse your hands well.
- Dry your hands well.
- Use a clean paper towel to turn off the water. Throw the paper towel away.

Here's how you should clean your hands with hand sanitizers (waterless hand cleaners):

- For gel product use one application.
- For foam product use a golf-ball size amount.
- Apply product to the palm of your hand.
- Rub your hands together. Cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers until they are dry.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Health care workers often wear gloves, gowns, masks, or eye protection. Staff may wear some of these protective items while caring for you. This practice is called "standard precautions" (pree-CAW-shuns). This practice protects all patients and staff from germs and infections.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Sometimes a patient has a germ that can easily spread to other people. To protect others from the germ, “special precautions” are used. These special practices prevent the spread of the germs that can cause disease. If you have a known or suspected infection that requires special precautions, your nurse will explain these practices to you.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

It is important to Grace Health that you understand the need for hand washing, standard precautions, and special precautions. If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.