



The Reading Hospital and Medical Center

Safety **FIRST**: Infection Prevention Tips

The Reading Hospital and Medical Center is committed to providing high quality care to our patients. Your healthcare team does many things to help prevent infections. There are ways you can help protect yourself.

Practice Hand Hygiene: Clean Your Hands!

The most important way to prevent infections is to clean your hands.

There are 2 ways for you to clean your hands. You may use:

- soap and water
or
- alcohol hand gel or foam (sanitizer)

How do I clean my hands?

When washing your hands with plain or antibacterial soap, follow these steps:

1. Wet your hands first with warm running water. Avoid hot water.
2. Apply soap to your hands.
3. Cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers with soap lather.
4. Rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds.
5. Rinse all the soap off your hands with water. **Do not turn water off.**
6. Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel.
7. **Use a paper towel to turn off the water faucet.**

When using alcohol gel or foam, follow these steps:

1. Apply alcohol gel or foam to the palm of one hand.
2. Use enough to cover **all** surfaces of your hands and fingers.
3. Include areas around and under your fingernails.
4. Rub your hands together.
5. Continue rubbing your hands together until the alcohol dries. It should take at least 10 - 15 seconds of rubbing before your hands feel dry.

Please note: **Do not** use alcohol gel or foam when a patient or family member has diarrhea.

When should I clean my hands?

Before: cooking, touching, or eating food

After:

- soiling of hands, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose
- using the rest room
- touching body fluids, open wounds, and wound dressings
- touching anything that is dirty
- changing a diaper
- taking out the trash
- touching pets

All members of your healthcare team should clean their hands before and after touching you. Remind them if they have not performed hand hygiene. They may also wear gloves and other special items when providing care to you.

Remind your visitors to wash their hands before and after they visit.

Practice Respiratory Hygiene: Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough!

Use a tissue when you sneeze or cough, and throw it away when done. Clean your hands right away.

If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the bend of your arm or your hand. If you use your hands, clean them right away.

Isolation Precautions

Isolation Precautions are rules we follow in the Hospital to prevent the spread of germs. There are four types of precaution categories that may be followed. The type used depends on the way the germ is spread. One or more categories may be used depending on your illness and the germ.

The four types of precaution categories are:

- airborne
- droplet
- contact
- additional hand and environmental contact

If your illness requires isolation precautions, you may need to be moved into another room. A sign will be posted outside your room. The sign lists the items your healthcare team and visitors will need to wear when entering your room. You will be given a patient education handout specific to the isolation precaution category. It is important for you and your family to review and understand this information. It is also important to know that visitors must be at least 14 years of age to visit a patient in isolation precautions.

Catheters

A catheter is a small tube that may be used to remove a blood sample or to give you fluids, medicine or nutrition through a large vein (blood vessel). Different types of catheters can also be used to drain fluids from wounds or to remove urine from your bladder (which stores urine).

Central Line Catheters

A central line or central catheter is placed into a large vein. This is a special catheter used to draw blood and to give you fluids or medicines. It may be left in place for several weeks.

A bloodstream infection is an infection in the blood. Germs do not normally live in these areas, but if germs are introduced an infection can occur.

To Prevent a Central Line Bloodstream Infection:

When putting a central line into your body, we will:

- clean our hands before the procedure
- wear a mask, cap, sterile gown, and gloves when putting in the catheter to keep it sterile
- cover you with a sterile sheet
- clean your skin with an antiseptic cleanser before placing the catheter

When we touch or use your central line, we will:

- clean our hands
- wear gloves
- clean the catheter opening with an antiseptic to draw blood or to change the bandage covering the area

We will check every day to see if you still need to have the catheter. The goal is to remove the catheter when it is no longer needed.

You should tell your nurse immediately if the:

- bandage becomes loose, wet, or dirty or if it comes off
- area around your catheter is sore or red

Family and friends who visit you must:

- clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after visiting you
- not touch the catheter or tug on the tubing

Urinary Catheters

A urinary catheter is a thin tube placed into the bladder to drain urine. The urine will go through the tube into a collection bag. A urinary catheter may be used when you cannot pass urine on your own.

A urinary tract infection is an infection in the urinary system which includes the bladder and the kidneys (which filter blood to make urine). Germs do not normally live in these areas. However, if germs are introduced, an infection can occur.

If you have a urinary catheter, germs can travel along the catheter and cause an infection in your bladder or kidneys. Most of the germs that cause a catheter-associated urinary tract infection are common germs. They may be found in your intestine, but usually do not cause an infection there.

To Prevent Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections:

We will:

- **put a catheter in only when necessary and remove it as soon as possible**
- clean our hands before and after touching your catheter
- clean your skin before placing the catheter
- keep the bag below the level of your bladder
- empty the bag regularly
- keep the catheter attached to your leg to prevent pulling
- check every day to see if you still need to have the catheter

You should:

- keep the catheter and drain tube connected; do not disconnect
- never twist the catheter or tubing

Surgery

Most patients who have surgery do not develop an infection at the part of the body where they had surgery. However, infections develop in about 1 to 3 out of every 100 patients who have surgery. Most surgical site infections can be treated with antibiotics. Sometimes patients with surgical site infections also need another surgery to treat the infection.

To Prevent Surgical Site Infections:

Before your surgery, you must:

- follow the directions about what you should do before your surgery
- clean your skin as directed
- take medicines as directed
- not shave with a razor near the area where you are having surgery

At the time of your surgery, we may:

- use electric clippers to remove some of your hair in the area where the surgery will occur
- clean your skin with a special soap that kills germs at the site of your surgery
- give you antibiotics usually 60 minutes before your surgery
- stop the antibiotics within 24 hours after surgery

At the time of your surgery, we will:

- wear special hair covers, masks, gowns, and gloves to keep the surgery area clean

After your surgery, you must:

- take medicines as directed
- clean your hands before and after caring for your wound
- care for your surgery site, as taught
- call your doctor if you think you have symptoms of an infection, such as redness at the surgery site, drainage, or fever

Pennsylvania Act 52

Despite our best efforts, all infections may not be preventable. Pennsylvania law (Act 52) requires that we report infections to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and notify you in writing. The report is confidential and protected under both state and federal law.



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