INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Why is my ward closed?

Introduction
This leaflet explains why the ward you or your relative is currently on is being closed for a while and what you can do to help reduce the risk of spreading infection.
The recent publicity about patients catching infections while they are in hospital has caused a great deal of concern across the country. Patients and visitors, as well as hospital staff, can help to reduce the risk of infections happening.

Why is my ward closed?
The ward on which you are a patient has been closed to new admissions due to a number of patients on the ward having symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting which may be due to an infection. We want to stop the infection spreading to other patients, wards, departments in our hospital or to people who may be visiting their friends or family in hospital. Closing the ward is one of the ways we can minimise the risk to others.

What will help to stop the spread of infections?
A key area in helping to stop the spread of infections is hand washing and all staff will be doing this before and after any contact with patients or their environment. You will also see all staff “bare-below-the-elbows” which means no wrist watches or jewellery other than a wedding band and they will be wearing gloves and aprons when they are carrying out some aspects of your care. These gloves and aprons will be put in the bin before they move on to care for another patient. If you are experiencing any symptoms of the infection you may be cared for in a single room on the ward.

What can I do to help?
You are requested to
• make sure that you do not have too many personal items on the bed table or locker top as this can make cleaning these surfaces difficult
• make sure you always wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating. If you need help with this please ask your nurse.
• let your nurse know if you are feeling unwell, have diarrhoea or have been sick so that he or she can take the correct precautions.

Can I still have visitors?
When a ward has been closed there will be no visitors unless there are exceptional circumstances. This can be discussed with your nurse. This will help to prevent the spread of the infection to people outside of the hospital ward.

When will the ward be re-opened?
Whilst the ward is closed it will be visited daily by the Infection Prevention and
Control Team to monitor the number of patients and staff affected by the infection. The ward will be re-opened by the Infection Prevention and Control Team when there have been no further new patients with symptoms. Before re-opening, the ward will have a thorough clean of all rooms, floors and furniture and the curtains will be changed. Visitors will be permitted once this has been completed.

**Will the ward being closed affect my discharge home?**
Your discharge may be affected if you are showing symptoms of the infection. Patients going to a care home may be kept in hospital until the ward is re-opened. This is to stop the spread of infection to care homes. For further information on this please speak to your nurse.

If you have any further questions or concerns please talk to one of your nurses or a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

**Contact details**
Local information, your department

Infection Prevention and Control Team
Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
King’s Mill Hospital
Mansfield Road
Sutton-in-Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 4JL
01623 622515 extension 3525/6268

The Infection Prevention and Control Team is available Monday to Friday, 8am-4pm and there is an answer-phone outside these hours. Staff can contact the team for you

**Useful website:**
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

**Further sources of information**
NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

**Patient Experience Team (PET)**
PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King’s Mill Hospital** Tel: 01623 672222
**Newark Hospital** Tel: 01636 685692
**Email:** PET@sfh-tr.nhs.uk

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact the PET (as above).
Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust cannot accept liability for errors and omissions. The information should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. Stating a web address does not imply we endorse a particular site. Neither does not stating a web address imply lack of endorsement.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email patient.information@sfh-tr.nhs.uk or telephone 01623 622515 ext 2715.

All of our hospitals are smoke free and as such you will not be able to smoke anywhere on site including the car parks, pathways and grounds. Please speak to a member of staff if you would like to stop smoking. We can offer advice and refer you to services that support smokers who want to cut down or stop completely.

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