

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# COVID-19 Patient Information Leaflet for Areas Affected by COVID-19

At present we are in a COVID-19 pandemic and in the hospital is on high alert with COVID-19 testing in place. You may see hospital ward bays or wards closed as a precaution to prevent any spread of COVID-19.

The hospital Infection, Prevention and Control Team will be advising staff on controlling any COVID-19, in the hospital, at all times.

Below are some commonly asked questions and answers. If you have other questions the ward nurse can ask a member of the Infection, Prevention and Control Team, on your behalf.

### **What is COVID-19?**

It is a respiratory illness associated with infection by the COVID-19 virus. Symptoms include fever, persistent cough, loss of taste and or smell but can sometimes have Flu-like symptoms. It can affect different people in a variety of ways, ranging from minor symptoms through to severe respiratory illness. The average time from symptom onset to clinical recovery for mild infections is approximately 2 weeks and can be much longer in severe infections.

### **How long will someone with COVID-19 be infectious to others?**

People are infectious for 2 days before symptoms develop and for 14 days after symptoms have started. They can continue to spread the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes and that is why it is important to catch coughs and sneezes in disposable tissues and dispose of them straightaway and then wash hands or use alcohol hand gel.

## **How can I catch it?**

The virus is contagious and can spread between people.

Transmission is by:

Coughing or sneezing

Touching or shaking the hand of an infected person and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose

Touching surfaces or objects that have become contaminated with the COVID-19 virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose without first washing your hands.

Try to keep hands away from the eyes, mouth and nose to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 virus.

**Coughing or sneezing into a disposable tissue reduces spread to others. Regular washing of hands for 20 seconds or use of disinfectant wipes or alcohol hand rub can reduce risks of getting COVID-19.**

## **Am I infectious if I don't have symptoms?**

Some persons with COVID-19 do not have symptoms (asymptomatic) but they can still be infectious and that is why the Government and Infection Prevention & Control ask everyone to remember 'Face (wear a mask), Space (stay 2 metres apart) and Hands (regularly wash hands or use alcohol handrub or hand wipes).

## **If you are in a bay or ward affected by COVID-19**

The bay or ward area will be closed to new admissions and visiting may be reduced further.

The health care workers will use gloves, aprons, visors and face masks to minimize the risk of spreading the virus

You will be asked to wear a mask. We understand that you may not feel comfortable with a mask on and will discuss this with you personally

You will receive more frequent COVID-19 nose and throat swabs and in some cases the swabs may be taken daily.

Your health care worker may ask you to wear a face mask to minimize risk of transmission, especially when being moved to another ward or department.

You may be asked to use certain toilets and bathing facilities and be asked to stay at your bedside when not using facilities.

The curtains around your bed may remain closed to protect all patients in the bay. The plastic curtain should be drawn across between beds when the privacy curtains are not required.

You will be offered hand washing opportunities or be given disinfectant wipes to clean your hands and please use them after using the toilet/commode and before eating.

You will notice extra cleaning being performed.

**N.B. The emerging evidence base on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. Further updates may be made to this guidance as new detail or evidence emerges.**

**Produced by the Infection Prevention & Control Team November 2020.**

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.