

Contact isolation and your child

What is contact isolation?

Contact isolation is a combination of isolation and hygiene practices used to prevent germs from spreading in the hospital. Germs are spread directly by skin-to-skin contact or indirectly by touching contaminated door knobs, hand rails, medical equipment, and other objects in a patient's surroundings. Germs on objects in your surroundings can be removed by cleaning with disinfectant. Germs can be carried by a person without causing an infection; this is called "colonization." If you have an infection, your doctor will treat it. If you are colonized, it may not need treatment. In both situations, good hand hygiene will reduce the spread of germs.

Why is your child on contact isolation?

Test results show that you have:

- Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)
- C. difficile*
- Vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE)
- ESBL bacteria
- Other: _____

Important things to know

- Read "Patient Information – Hand hygiene and your child."

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most important way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub often. Ask your care providers and visitors to clean their hands frequently.

Patients

Gowns and gloves

- Staff will wear a gown and gloves when they are in your child's room.

Before you leave your room

- Talk to your child's nurse. Your child can leave the room with you and a staff member for tests and procedures.
- You and your child must clean your hands right before you leave your room.
- Your child cannot go to public areas in the hospital (such as cafeteria, library, gift shop, cafe), or The Children's Inn, Family Lodge, Cloisters apartments, or Woodmont House.
- Your child cannot visit any other patients. Other patients may not visit your child.
- Participation in organized activities must be approved by the Hospital Epidemiology Service. Ask your child's nurse if your child would like to attend organized activities.

If your child needs...

- Or if you need to wash your child's clothes, ask your child's nurse and he or she will explain the process and provide laundry soap.
- Linens, snacks, or a drink, you may get these items for your child. Remember to clean your hands when you leave your child's room.
- A meal and your child has not received it, ask your child's nurse if it arrived. Once food has been in your child's room, it cannot be brought out for reheating so it will be kept outside the room until your child is ready to eat.

Family and Visitors

Gowns and gloves

- Put on a gown and gloves when assisting with patient care activities (such as dressing changes, cleaning up potty accidents, changing diapers, and bathing).

Personal items

- Personal items that cannot be disinfected or discarded (such as bags, coats, cell phones, laptops) should not be brought into the room-.
- Once food has been in the room, it cannot be brought out for reheating. Do not bring food or drinks out of the room.

Leaving the isolation room

- Remove your gown and gloves (if applicable) when leaving the patient room.
- Clean your hands right after leaving the room.
- Do not visit any other patients.
- You may visit the public areas of the hospital (such as the cafeteria, library, gift shop, and cafe) without the patient.
- You may go to The Children's Inn, Family Lodge, Cloisters apartments, or Woodmont House without the patient.

When will isolation end?

- Your child may be on isolation for a few hours or for several months. Your care provider will tell you when your child's isolation ends.
- Your child will be on isolation as an inpatient and outpatient until the Hospital Epidemiology Service determines that isolation is no longer needed.
- Isolation does not determine the length of your child's hospital stay.

Be informed. Be empowered. Be prepared.

Questions?

Ask your nurse, doctor, or call the Hospital Epidemiology Service at 301-496-2209.

For more information visit the NIH Clinical Center's Patient Portal:

http://patientportal.cc.nih.gov/pt_care/patient_infection_control.shtml

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