

**Where can I find out more information?**

Please advise staff if you require any further information or wish to speak to the hospital infection control nurse.

Consumer guides are also available on specific health care associated infections such as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in HealthCare (ACSQHC) websites.

[WWW.nhmrc.gov.au](http://WWW.nhmrc.gov.au)

[WWW.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://WWW.safetyandquality.gov.au)



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**Hand Hygiene** Hand Hygiene is considered the most important measure in preventing the spread of infection.

Correct procedures and frequent hand washing will remove visible dirt and soil and potentially harmful microorganisms. This minimises the risk of cross-contamination through physical contact with patients and co-workers, and touching inanimate objects which include door handles and telephones.

Hands should be cleaned before and after visits with patients, eating, smoking, blowing your nose, going to the toilet, after contact with blood or other potentially infectious material, after removing gloves or other protective clothing.

Hand hygiene makes a difference! Visitors as well as staff, should clean their hands often.

**Hand Rubs** • Alcohol hand rubs are available at reception, in the examination room, outside all patient rooms and various other locations around the hospital. Rubs are practical and an acceptable alternative to hand washing. • Hand Rub Solutions should come in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Hands should be rubbed together vigorously for at least 30 seconds.

**Hand Washing** Doing it right! • Wet your hands: then apply soap. • Rub the soap lather all over your hands. • Wash all surfaces of your hands and fingers for 10 to 15 seconds. Be sure to get under your nails, around cuticles and between fingers. • Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse. • Dry your hands completely using a clean towel. • Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

Hand washing techniques are covered in mandatory training provided by Qld Health. It is compulsory for all Diagnostic Ultrasound Imaging staff to attend Qld Health's mandatory training annually.

**Infection Control** Our Priority • Infection control is the responsibility of all health care workers within our practice. All new staff are made aware of policy and procedures in place regarding infection control and are expected to attend regular infection control education updates. • Reusable instruments and equipment are cleaned and sterilised according to Australian Standards and compliance with standards is monitored. • Single use policy. This ensures that 'single use' equipment is not re-processed/re-used.

**Who is At Risk?** Because many infectious agents are present in health care settings, patients may be infected while receiving care, health care workers (which include doctors, sonographers and nurses) may be infected during the course of their duties and other people (such as receptionists) may be infected when working or interacting with patients.

Infectious agents evolve and constantly present new challenges in the health care setting. Continually modifying and improving procedures is important in meeting these challenges. Our practice has a written policy on infection control processes.

**What is An Infection?** An infection is an illness caused by “germs” such as bacteria and viruses. An infection is “contagious” / “infectious” when it can be passed from person to person. The common cold is an example of a contagious disease. By following a few simple steps we can reduce the risk of spreading germs to patients, staff and visitors. Everyone has an important role to play in infection control.

**Why Are Precautions Used?** Infections

like hepatitis B and C can be passed through contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials. Someone with these viruses or other illness may not look sick. Because of this, standard precautions apply to **ALL** patients every time contact with blood or body fluids is possible.

**Standard Precautions** Standard precautions are used at all times with all patients. The fact that your care givers use standard precautions does not necessarily mean that you have a contagious disease. But to protect you and themselves, they assume that every patient may have an infection. Standard precautions including hand hygiene and wearing protective clothing are good ways to prevent the spread of these and other serious infections. Even visitors must follow standard precautions.

**Additional Precautions** Some patients may need extra care if they have certain infections. Additional precautions are tailored to the particular germ causing the infection and how the germ is spread. Additional precautions may include: • Dedicated patient equipment. • Additional use of protective equipment or clothing such as masks and gowns. • Restricted movement of patients and staff.

**ASK THE STAFF** • Be understanding – these precautions may seem extreme, but remember, they help protect everyone.