



## Preventing Infection When Visiting Others

### MU Patient Education Series

Infections are illnesses that are caused by germs. Germs may come from bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Patients in the hospital are already not well. Exposing them to these germs may make it harder for them to recover and go home. If you are visiting a friend or loved one, you need to take steps to prevent spreading germs.

#### BEST WAYS TO PREVENT INFECTION:

- Wash your hands often
- Stay home if you are sick
- Keep your immunizations (shots) up to date
- Follow precautions

#### WASH YOUR HANDS:

- Before you go inside a patient's room
- After leaving a patient's room
- After using the bathroom
- After touching a patient
- Before and after using gloves
- Before preparing food or eating
- After touching meat, fish or poultry
- After handling garbage
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands

#### HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS:

- Wet your hands and wrists, and then apply soap
- Scrub your hands together for at least 20 seconds



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- Create bubbles with soap
- Rinse well
- Remove jewelry
- Keep nails short and clean underneath
- Dry your hands with a clean paper towel
- Do not touch the sink and faucets after you wash your hands
- Use the paper towel to turn the water off and open the door

### USE HAND SANITIZER:

- After touching various items
- When clean running water is not available
- When soap is not available

### HOW TO USE A HAND SANITIZER:

- Apply a dime-sized amount in the palm of one hand
- Rub your hands together, making sure both sides are covered
- Rub until hands are dry

### STAY HOME WHEN SICK:

You should stay home if you are not feeling well. This will help stop the spread of infection. Remember, a simple cold could be a big problem for a patient in the hospital. If you are not sure if you can visit, call your doctor or nurse find out if it is okay to visit.

### GET THE FLU SHOT:

Get the flu shot before visiting anyone in the fall and winter months. This will help decrease the spread of the flu.

### ISOLATION:

If you visit a patient with a sign outside their door, you should stop at the nurses' station before entering the patient's room. The sign is a clue that you may need some type of protection to prevent the spreading germs.

\*\* Always wash your hands when visibly soiled.

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