

Washing clothes at home

This leaflet is for anyone who is washing the clothes of someone who has been in hospital.



Is there a risk of infection to myself or my family?

There is a small risk of infection to you and your family but the information in this leaflet will help you handle the clothes safely.

How will I carry the clothing home?

The clothing will be put in a patient clothing bag if it has been soiled. This sealed bag will then be placed into a plastic patient property bag. You should not be able to see what is in the bag from the outside, but you may want to bring another bag to put the clothing inside. If you do, make sure there are no other items in the bag, such as food.

Make sure you wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling dirty clothing and before touching clean clothing.

How should I handle the clothing I take home?

1. Wash the clothing as soon as possible and separate from your own clothing.
2. Put the clothing directly into the washing machine. Avoid touching the clothing if you can.
3. If you need to touch the clothing, wear gloves and dispose of them when you are finished. You should also wash your hands with soap and warm water.
4. Check the washing instructions on the labels carefully. Hold the clothing away from you to avoid spreading germs.
5. Don't overload your washing machine.
6. Once the clothing is in the washing machine, throw the bag you used to carry the clothing home away.
7. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water and clean the area around your washing machine (e.g. the door handle, worktops) with a disinfectant spray or wipe.

8. Wash the clothing at the highest temperature possible, following the washing instructions. You can use your normal washing powder or detergent.
9. Tumble dry the clothes if you can, following the instructions on the clothing label. If you can't, dry the clothes in the way you usually would, such as on the washing line.
10. Iron the clothes if you can, following the instructions on the clothing label. If possible, use a hot steam iron.
11. Store the items in a clean dry place. If you are taking the clothing back to the hospital, make the bag is clean.

If the clothing is soiled (dirty) the clothing may have been put in a patient clothing bag which can be put directly into the washing machine. The patient clothing bags are white in colour (they usually have orange writing on the outside) and the bag will be tied up with a pink/red plastic strip.

If items are in a patient clothing bag (soiled clothing)

- Take the patient clothing bag out of the plastic bag. Put the patient clothing bag directly into the washing machine. Do not open the bag as it has been designed to go straight into the machine.
- Use a pre-wash cycle before the main wash cycle, if possible.
- Set the washing machine to wash to a temperature of 40°C or higher if possible. You can use your normal washing powder or detergent.
- The seam and tie of the bag will dissolve, releasing the contents of the bag for washing. When the washing cycle is complete, remove the patient clothing bag and throw it away in your normal household waste as it is now clean.
- Clean your hands with soap and warm water after handling the bag.
- Follow steps 9 to 11 as usual. Do not tumble dry the bag.

Further information is available from:



Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback which can be shared in a number of ways through the hospital website. Scan the QR code to give feedback. <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/feedback/>

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

111 (free from a landline or mobile)

www.nhs.uk

Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality health information, local organisations and community groups is available from the library. www.library.sath.nhs.uk/fnd/patients/

Information in Other Languages or Formats

If you require this information in a different way such as easy read, a different language, larger print, audio or braille please tell a member of staff or contact the Patient Experience Team;

sath.patientexperience@nhs.net or 01743 261000 ext. 2503.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

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