

Hygiene and Infection Prevention

Isolation



Beter voor elkaar

Introduction

This brochure is for patients who are nursed in isolation and for family/visitors of these patients.

Examinations recently showed that you are carrying a micro-organism, for which special precautionary measures need to be taken.

This brochure contains information about what micro-organisms are and about the abovementioned precautionary measures which aim to prevent a micro-organism from spreading to patients, visitors and hospital staff members.

If you have any questions after reading this information, you may contact the nursing staff.

Isolation

Being nursed in isolation literally means: 'being nursed separately'.

There is a specific reason why you are being nursed in isolation. The reason why you are being nursed in isolation is mentioned below. The nursing staff/physician will also tell you why you are isolated.

You are isolated for the following reason:

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There are several types of isolation. The form of isolation which applies in your case is checked below:

- ☐ Contact isolation
- ☐ Droplet isolation
- ☐ Airborne isolation (TB isolation)
- ☐ Strict isolation

Micro-organisms

What are micro-organisms?

As already indicated by the name, micro-organisms are very small and invisible to the naked eye. Micro-organisms include bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites.

Everyone carries micro-organisms. They can be found on or in the body. These micro-organisms are normal to the human body and their function is often useful. An example of this is the important role that bacteria play in our digestion.

Many micro-organisms are innocent, but sometimes they can cause an infection. This infection can be caused by a micro-organism that someone already carries or by a micro-organism from the outside.

Transfer of micro-organisms

Micro-organisms can be transferred from humans to humans. This can occur in various ways and depends, among other things, on the type of micro-organism. For instance, some micro-organisms can only be transmitted through direct contact (often through the hands). Others can be transmitted through the air, for example when coughing. And there are micro-organisms that can be transmitted in both ways.

Nursing in isolation

In a hospital, there are many people who all live rather close to each other. That is why a micro-organism can spread among a large group of people in a short period of time. Moreover, patients often have somewhat less resistance and are therefore more sensitive to infections. In order to prevent pathogenic micro-organisms from spreading, patients carrying these micro-organisms are nursed in isolation.

Forms of isolation

There are four different main groups of isolation, namely: contact isolation, droplet isolation, airborne isolation and strict isolation. The form of isolation in which you are nursed depends on the type of micro-organism with which you are contaminated and in particular the way in which this micro-organism spreads.

Each form of isolation has specific consequences for you and your family/visitors, which are mentioned below.

Contact/droplet isolation

Contact/droplet isolation applies if you are carrying a pathogenic micro-organism which is transmitted through direct contact (often through the hands).

This entails the following:

- You will be informed by the nursing staff/physician as to why isolation is applied;
- You lie in a single room; sometimes, the door may be left open;
- You may wear your own clothes, provided that they can be washed at 60 degrees Celsius. If necessary, you will be given pyjamas from the ward;
- You may leave your room if this is of importance to your mobilization, on condition that you do not come into contact with other patients and that any wounds you may have are properly covered;
- If you are transferred to another ward, you have to put on clean clothes. During your transport, the staff members will be wearing gloves;
- Staff members will wear gloves when they come to your room and are in direct contact with you. If necessary, they will also wear an apron;
- Visitors first need to report to the nursing station/nursing staff;
- Visitors are required to follow any measures to be taken;
- Upon leaving your room, the visitors need to disinfect their hands with hand alcohol and immediately leave the hospital. If other visits need to be paid in the hospital, the visit to you should be the last one;

- Children below 12 years of age may sometimes only be allowed after consultation;
- There is an instruction schedule (isolation card) hanging by the door to your room.

Droplet isolation

Droplet isolation applies if you are carrying a pathogenic micro-organism which is transmitted through large droplets in the air (after coughing or sneezing).

This entails the following:

- You will be informed by the nursing staff/physician as to why isolation is applied;
- You lie in a single room; sometimes, the door may be left open;
- You may wear your own clothes;
- You may leave your room if this is of importance to your mobilization, on condition that you do not come into contact with other patients and that you wear a mouth-and-nose mask;
- If you are transferred to another ward, you have to put on clean clothes and wear a mouth-and-nose mask during the transfer;
- Staff members will wear a mouth-and nose mask when they come to your room;
- Visitors first need to report to the nursing station/nursing staff;
- Visitors are required to follow any measures to be taken;
- Upon leaving your room, the visitors need to disinfect their hands with hand alcohol and immediately leave the hospital. If other visits need to be paid in the hospital, the visit to you should be the last one;
- Children below 12 years of age may only be allowed after consultation;
- There is an instruction schedule (isolation card) hanging by the door to your room.

Airborne isolation

Airborne isolation applies if you are carrying a pathogenic micro-organism which is transmitted through small droplets in the air (after coughing).

An example of this is tuberculosis. These micro-organisms can spread over a larger distance than the micro-organisms to which droplet isolation applies. Airborne isolation therefore requires taking more strict precautionary measures than with droplet isolation.

- This entails the following:
- You will be informed by the nursing staff/physician as to why isolation is applied;
- You lie in a single room with an air lock; the door has to be closed;
- You may wear your own clothes;
- You may leave your room if this is of importance to your mobilization, on condition that you do not come into contact with other patients and that you wear a mouth-and-nose mask;
- If you are transferred to another ward, you have to put on clean clothes and wear a mouth-and-nose mask during the transfer;
- Staff members will wear a mouth-and nose mask when they come to your room;
- Visitors first need to report to the nursing station/nursing staff;
- Visitors are required to follow any measures to be taken;
- Upon leaving your room, the visitors need to disinfect their hands with hand alcohol and immediately leave the hospital. If other visits need to be paid in the hospital, the visit to you should be the last one;
- Children below 12 years of age may only be allowed after consultation;
- There is an instruction schedule (isolation card) hanging by the door to your room.

Strict isolation

Strict isolation applies if you are carrying a pathogenic micro-organism which is transmitted both through direct contact and through the air. It is necessary to take strict precautionary measures.

This entails the following:

- You will be informed by the nursing staff/physician as to why isolation is applied;
- You lie in a single room with an air lock; the door has to be closed;
- You may wear your own clothes, provided that they can be washed at 60 degrees Celsius. If necessary, you will be given pyjamas from the ward;
- You are asked not to leave your room if there is no urgent reason;
- If you are transferred to another ward, you have to put on clean clothes and wear a mouth-and-nose mask during the transfer. During your transport, the staff members will be wearing gloves;
- Staff members will wear gloves, an apron and a mouth-and-nose mask when they come to your room;
- Visitors first need to report to the nursing station/nursing staff;
- Visitors are required to follow any measures to be taken;
- Upon leaving your room, the visitors need to disinfect their hands with hand alcohol and immediately leave the hospital. If other visits need to be paid in the hospital, the visit to you should be the last one;
- Children below 12 years of age may only be allowed after consultation;
- There is an instruction schedule (isolation card) hanging by the door to your room.

Control cultures

In certain situations, it may be necessary to determine whether you are still carrying the micro-organism. To this end, several types of cultures may be taken, for example a culture of a wound, faeces (defecation), urine or coughed-up sputum. These cultures are examined in the laboratory for the presence of the micro-organism. If it is demonstrated that you no longer carry the micro-organism, the special precautionary measures will be lifted in consultation with the Hygiene and Infection Prevention department.

Back home

When you have returned home, you usually do not have to take any separate measures. If you are expected back at the outpatients' department for further treatment, control cultures may still be taken. It could also be that during your visit to the outpatients' department, special measures still need to be taken.

Finally

We realise that all this could have a far-reaching and unpleasant effect on you, but we hope that you understand the measures. The hospital is always prepared to answer questions and to see whether any problems can be solved together with you. You may initially contact your attending physician or the nursing staff for this. More specific information can be obtained from the Hygiene and Infection Prevention department. The nursing staff may arrange this for you.

Any questions, remarks or ideas?

Please do not hesitate to pass them on to the ward nurses.

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