

If you would like any further information please contact the Infection Control Team via the hospital switchboard.

Washing Clothes at Home

Advice for Carers



Advice for carers taking home clothing contaminated with body fluids, including faeces.

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Please do not ask staff to wash clothing for you as they do not have the facilities to do so.

The risk of infection to you and your family is low, but the information in this leaflet will help you handle the clothing safely.

- Staff in the ward will place any contaminated clothing in two plastic bags. The outer is for transport home but the inner bag will partially dissolve in your washing machine. You should keep the contaminated clothes in the inner bag and place this in the washing machine.

- Machine wash any contaminated clothing as soon as possible when you return home.
- Do not mix the soiled clothing with other washing.
- Remove clothing from the outer bag and place the inner dissolvable bag directly into the washing machine. Place the outer bag into your household rubbish.
- If possible, wash the clothing with a biological washing powder or liquid, in the highest temperature possible that the clothing will tolerate (ideally this should be 60°C or above). It is the combination of sufficient water to rinse the load well and heat in the last stage of the process that makes sure that both bacteria and viruses are killed.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after putting the clothing into the washing machine.
- At the end of the wash cycle, remove the partially dissolved bag and place it into your household rubbish.
- Clothing should be either air dried or tumble dried and then ironed, if fabric allows.

Please:

- Do not rinse out clothes – this only leads to contamination of the sink and possibly yourself.
- Do not soak clothes in disinfectant – this will either only partially remove the physical soiling and leave other areas dirty or bleach the clothing and spoil the fibres.
- Do not boil wash – man-made fibres will shrink and wool will be ruined.

