Hospitals should only have automatic doors without handles and all toilets should have non-touch flushes and taps. Non-touch flushes are helpful but where they are not available you can lower the risk of infection spreading by simply washing your hands after flushing.

Paper towels used to dry hands after hand washing should be kept in the hands to turn off the taps, to avoid recontamination of clean hands.

If you are concerned about door handles, then the best place to clean your hands is once you arrive at the patient’s bedside using either the sink or the alcohol hand rub at the foot of the bed or in a dispenser on the wall.

You can only get MRSA and C. diff in dirty hospitals
Everyone expects a hospital to be clean, and hospitals have rigorous and specialist cleaning practices in place to help prevent the spread of infection. However, MRSA and C. difficile infections can occur even in the cleanest hospitals and this is because they can be caused by some types of antibiotics.

Sometimes the use of antibiotics is unavoidable as this medication is key to treatment, however hospital doctors and GPs must ensure that antibiotics are prescribed appropriately to minimise the risks. If you are concerned, your doctor will be able to explain this in more detail.

Where can I get more information?
Further information can be obtained from Public Health England.
If you require further information during your stay please speak to the nurses and doctors in charge or contact a member of the infection control team on 01 234 355122

Staff should not wear their uniform outside of the hospital as it spreads infections like norovirus
The wearing of uniforms off site does not compromise infection control. Uniforms are worn to enable patients to identify different types of healthcare staff and are otherwise exactly the same as ordinary clothes, which many people also wear to work in healthcare settings. They hold no special properties in terms of protection and they pose no greater risk than ordinary clothes. Bedford Hospital has a policy that our uniformed staff should change at work to support a professional image.

When staff are caring for patients with an infection such as diarrhoea and/or vomiting they wear protective clothing such as aprons and gloves which are then removed and safely disposed of to prevent the spread of infection.

Patient records are touched by many members of staff so paperwork may be contaminated with MRSA and C. diff
Paper does not support the growth of germs, although occasionally it can become contaminated. Patient records cannot be disinfected without being damaged, however good hand hygiene practices will prevent germs from spreading.

INFECTION FICTION:
Here are some of the common myths around infection control:

- Hand gel should be at the main entrance
Using hand gel at the hospital entrance does not protect patients from infection. The key points for hand hygiene, either using soap and water or an antibacterial rub, is on entering and leaving the ward, at the bedside or in the clinic room, after using toilet facilities and before eating.

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Nobody should be harmed by a preventable infection. This leaflet explains how we work to protect you from infection while you are in hospital and what you can do to help us prevent infection from spreading.

- Always wash your hands using soap and water or hospital hand gel dispensers on the ward entrances before and after you visit a ward.
- Stay at home if you have a cold, infection or stomach upset and only visit if you have had no symptoms for at least 48 hours.
- Keep children under 12, especially babies, at home because they are vulnerable to germs and infections brought into hospital.
- Use the chairs provided on wards, do not sit on the beds. Do not put your feet up on the beds if you are visiting.
- “It’s ok to ask” - politely remind staff about hand hygiene – they will not be offended.
- Do not share your relative’s toiletries, tissues or hospital equipment with other patients.
- Do not visit in large groups (only two visitors are permitted on the ward at one time).
- Stick to visiting times so that the domestic team can clean around the bed spaces and ward area.

Visitors who are unwell themselves bring germs into the hospital which can spread easily and quickly amongst vulnerable patients and can cause infection outbreaks. If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours, particularly if you have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting please do not come into hospital to visit your friend or relative.

**Hand Hygiene Information**

**Why we need to clean our hands:**
- We pick up germs every single time we touch something.
- Even when hands appear to be clean, germs will still be present.
- Cleaning the hands prevents transfer of the germs to other areas of your body, and to others.

**When and where**

Good hand hygiene plays an important role in preventing the spread of infection wherever you are. The most important time to clean hands is just before and just after you have had contact with a patient.

**Always clean your hands:**
- Just before you touch a patient
- When entering or leaving a ward
- After visiting the toilet
- After sneezing or coughing
- Before eating or handling food and after eating or drinking.
- If they look dirty

**Where can I find more information?**

Further Information can be obtained from Public Health England.

If you require further information during your stay, please speak to your doctor or nurse or ask to see an Infection Prevention Control Nurse on: 01 234 355122

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**Hand Hygiene**

The role of hand hygiene can help us prevent the spread of infection.

**How to wash your hands effectively with soap and water:**

- Wet hands thoroughly before applying soap.
- Vigorously rub all surfaces of both hands with soap lather.
- Pay special attention to the finger tips, thumbs and between fingers (these areas are frequently missed when washing hands)
- Rinse off all the soap under running water and dry hands thoroughly.
- Always cover cuts with waterproof plasters.
- When you can, apply hand cream as this helps to prevent dryness and chapping

**Staff training and awareness**

Throughout the year we monitor effective hand hygiene by trained staff on wards to ensure good practice is being followed and all clinical staff have yearly training on infection control. In addition we run activities and information campaigns to raise awareness of good infection control practice throughout the year.