**TIPS ON GOOD HAND WASHING**

Hand washing takes about 15 seconds.

- Use soap and running water
- Rub hands together as you wash them
- Make sure that all surfaces are washed, including:
  - Finger tips
  - Thumbs
  - Wrists
  - Back of hands
  - Between fingers
- Rinse hands thoroughly with running water
- Dry hands thoroughly (pat dry)
- Use a skin lotion if hands are dry
- Cover any cuts or abrasions with a band aid or other waterproof dressing.

**WHEN TO WASH HANDS**

- When your hands are dirty
- Before eating
- Before handling food or entering the kitchen or parents room
- Before and after attending to a wound
- After going to the toilet
- After handling objects that are soiled with blood or other body fluids (ie urine, faeces, vomit, nasal secretions)
- Before and after touching your baby

**OTHER BROCHURES AVAILABLE REGARDING INFECTION CONTROL**

The following brochures are available by asking ward nursing / midwifery staff or contacting the Infection Control Unit

- NPA (Nasopharyngeal Aspirate)
- ‘Bug Watch’
- Respiratory Syncitial Virus (RSV)
- Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase Producing Bacteria
- Multi-resistant Gram Negative Bacteria (MRGN)
- Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Infection Control Unit Information
- Chickenpox and Pregnancy

For further information please contact:
Infection Control Unit
☎ (08) 8161 6388
Fax: (08) 8161 6051

**Infection Control and your baby**

*Information for Patients and/or Care givers*

Brochure developed by Peta O’Callaghan (Infection Control Link Nurse, Rose Ward)

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Infection Control is an important part of your baby’s stay and involves many aspects such as good hand washing and limited contact with other patients.

Babies may be exposed to a variety of germs (eg bacteria or virus’) whilst they are in hospital because there may be other patients carrying these germs. There are many measures that the hospital puts in place to prevent germs from being spread from patient to patient. These measures should be carried out by all staff and visitors to maintain the best possible care for your baby and prevent cross infection.

### HOW DO GERMS SPREAD?

Germs can be spread in 3 different ways depending on the germ itself. Understanding how germs spread helps us to follow infection control measures set in place by the hospital to protect your baby.

1. **Contact** – either direct skin to skin contact or via an object such as a dummy or toy. Eg. Gastroenteritis (Vomiting/Diarrhoea)
2. **Droplet** – from sneezing and coughing onto a person or an object that then comes into contact with someone. Eg. Whooping cough, RSV (Bronchiolitis) and Influenza A
3. **Airborne** – transferred through the air via dust particles or droplets. Eg. Measles, Chicken Pox, Tuberculosis

### WHAT IS IMMUNITY?

Immunity is the body’s way of protecting itself against infection or disease. Babies generally acquire some of their mother’s immunity for the first few months after birth. Immunity can also be acquired from vaccinations or being exposed to a disease.

### WHY IS MY BABY AT GREATER RISK FOR INFECTION?

Babies under the age of 1 year are at a greater risk of infection for many reasons:

- They naturally have low immunity
- They may have an immune system defect
- The immunity that they get from their mother reduces as they get they older
- They may not have had their recommended immunisations or be only partially immunised due to their young age
- They require more contact with many people as they are not able to do things for themselves as yet
- They often require procedures, as part of their treatment in hospital that are linked with the risk of picking up germs, ie. catheters and wounds from surgery
- They may have siblings who have a childhood diseases such as chicken pox, RSV or whooping cough

### HOW CAN I PREVENT MY BABY GETTING AN INFECTION?

The most important things that you can do to help stop your baby from getting an infection is to:

- Wash your hands:
  - Before and after touching your baby
  - When your hands are dirty
  - After going to the toilet
  - Before eating
- Not handle other babies – this includes settling with patting or placing in a dummy
- Not touch or use other children’s toys/equipment
- Not allow siblings or visitors who are unwell to visit the hospital
- Not allow siblings or visitors to touch other babies and to wash their hands before touching your baby
- Ask your nurse or midwife to put ward toys and equipment away so that they are cleaned effectively
- Clean your baby’s bath with detergent and water after it is used
- Not walk around the ward if your baby is in isolation

**GOOD INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICE DEPENDS ON YOU!**

If you have any further questions about infection control and your baby please speak to your nurse, midwife or doctor.