

## **HOW TO BE A HEALTHY VISITOR**

### **The Patients Association Guide to Getting it Right**

#### **A HOSPITAL IS NOT A HOTEL**

Patients are vulnerable to infection. Everyone in a hospital, especially visitors, is vital to keeping them as safe as possible for patients.

#### **1. DON'T GO**

Don't visit if you are ill with any infection such as a cold. If in doubt check with ward staff beforehand. If you are taking antibiotics, YOU may be vulnerable to hospital infections as well. Again, check with ward staff.

#### **2. BE CLEAN**

Wear clean clothes. You wouldn't wear dirty clothes to go out on the town, so don't even think of wearing them to a hospital.

#### **3. TAKE CARE**

Take wipes with you and use any infection control methods provided on the wards such as hand gel.

#### **4. THINK BEFORE YOU TOUCH THE PATIENT**

Are your hands, and face, clean?

#### **5. NEVER SIT ON THE PATIENT'S BED**

Just think for a moment about the transfer of dirt and germs from your clothes to their blankets/

#### **6. CHECK VISITING HOURS IN ADVANCE**

Hospitals are changing visiting times. 'Open Access' is being replaced by set hours so that staff can ensure patients have protected times for meals and wards are clean.

#### **7. KEEP THE NUMBERS DOWN**

There simply isn't room for more than 1 or 2 visitors at a time.

#### **8. CHECK WITH THE HOSPITAL IF THERE ARE RULES ABOUT GIFTS**

Some hospitals will no longer allow flowers on some wards. The hospital shop will sell gifts that pass the 'ward test'.

#### **9. ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS IF YOU USE HOSPITAL TOILETS**

#### **10. BE VIGILANT**

If you see something that makes your patients more vulnerable, e.g. full waste bins, point it out to a member of staff.