Infection control is everyone’s business

The purpose of this Stop Press is to highlight the key role all our staff play in the prevention and control of infection. It also gives you important information about the announced inspection of Crosshouse Hospital by the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate (HEI).

The protection of patients, staff and visitors from healthcare associated infection (HAI) in hospital and the wider community is one of our top clinical improvement priorities.

Effective prevention and control of infection is everybody’s responsibility and it can only be achieved if we all recognise the part we and our colleagues play – whether or not we work in a clinical setting.

The information in this Stop Press can also be found in greater detail in the introduction to the Control of Infection manual. To find out more visit AthenA, click on the ‘Clinical’ tab and select Infection control and prevention.

How can you help?

The most important people in preventing and controlling infection are our staff. The most effective way of protecting people from HAI is to care for our patients in a clean environment using clean equipment with clean hands. We can all make sure this happens by contributing in different ways.

All staff must:

• comply fully with infection control policies and guidelines
• review and assess our own practice and that of our colleagues
• challenge those who do not adhere to policy and good infection control practice
• seek specialist advice whenever necessary
• act as a role model for good infection prevention and practice
• include a HAI element in their Personal Development Plans (PDPs)

In addition, line managers, senior managers, directors, contractors, volunteers and the staff working in support services such as clinical improvement and occupational health and safety, have their own specific roles and responsibilities for the prevention and control of infection. Please refer to the Control of Infection Manual, which sets out these in full.

Ultimately Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board is accountable for ensuring that we comply with all statutory and mandatory HAI standards.

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The authority is delegated from the Chief Executive to the Executive Medical Director, Dr Masterton. At each public session of the NHS Board meeting the Board receive and review a report on our progress against national HAI standards including Clostridium difficile Infections, Staphylococcus aureus Bacteraemias, and cleaning and hand hygiene compliance.

How can visitors help?
All visitors should be encouraged to follow basic hygiene rules when visiting patients in hospital. These include:

- Not visiting a patient in hospital if they are feeling unwell or have an infection such as flu or a heavy cold, or they or a member of their household are suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting.
- If they have had vomiting or diarrhoea they should not visit a patient in hospital until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.
- Washing their hands regularly with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. Use the hand hygiene facilities (hand washing or alcohol hand rub) before entering the ward and after visiting.
- Limiting the amount of items brought into hospital as they can cause clutter and make cleaning of the ward difficult.
- Not touching dressings, wounds, drips, catheters or any other equipment round the bed.
- Not using the patients’ toilets.
- Adhering to visiting times and to the number of visitors allowed.
- Speaking to any staff member about whether they have cleaned their hands.
- Talking to the nurse in charge if they have any concerns about hygiene on the ward or if they are worried or unsure about any infection control issues.

What else are we doing?
The Infection Control Team (ICT) is the focal point for providing support to staff in the prevention and control of infection. It consists of:

- Infection Control Manager
- Senior Infection Control Nurse
- Prevention and Control of Infection Doctor
- Infection Control Nurses
- Consultant Microbiologists
- Hand Hygiene Co-ordinator
- Clinical Trainer
- Administrative staff

The core functions of the ICT are:

- Audit
- Surveillance
- Policy and Guidelines
- Outbreak management
- Education and training
- Advice service
- Significant incident reporting, investigation and learning
- Promoting continuous clinical improvement

The other key teams supporting the prevention and control of infection are:

- The Health Protection Team, part of the Public Health department. It consists of Consultants in Public Health Medicine (with responsibility for Communicable Disease and Environmental Health) and Health Protection Nurse Specialists.
• The Antimicrobial Management Team, who are responsible for developing and promoting prudent antimicrobial prescribing in NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

• Occupational Health and Safety, who play a key role in promoting good prevention and control of infection practices and protecting staff from the risk of infection, while ensuring that we meet NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s statutory responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation.

• Our Infectious Disease Unit (Ward 2D, Crosshouse) provides expert advice on the clinical management of patients with communicable diseases; and offers isolation facilities and specialist care for patients suspected or known to have communicable diseases.

• The Healthcare Quality, Governance and Standards Unit is responsible for ensuring that there are effective systems and processes to implement and measure healthcare quality and standards of care. It co-ordinates the work required for external inspections, investigation of adverse events and the reporting through quality and governance mechanisms and the NHS Board.

• Our Clinical Improvement Team work on the wider Patient Safety agenda, which includes the introduction and monitoring of Healthcare Associated Infection care bundles. The team also ensure that prevention and control of infection is included as one of the issues that are assessed as part of directors and senior manager walk rounds.

And you!
The protection of our patients, staff and others from infectious diseases is part of all our jobs. If we are to provide the best care and protect our patients, our staff and others from healthcare associated infections we must all play our part.

Next inspection visits
The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate (HEI) will make an announced visit to Crosshouse Hospital on Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 August 2010. As part of the visit they will be interviewing staff. These interviews will take place with:

• Individual staff at ward/department level
• Individual staff in pre-arranged interviews
• Staff in group discussions

The interviews will focus on your knowledge of healthcare associated infection and infection control precautions. The team will also observe staff carrying out routine infection control precautions such as hand hygiene and correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The inspection team will select staff for interviews at ward/department level at the time of the inspection – we are not permitted to select staff in advance.

To support you and prepare you for the interviews, the Infection Control Team is running a number of education sessions up until Thursday 29 July 2010. These will be held in the Lecture Theatre in Crosshouse Hospital.

The following groups of staff should attend these sessions:

• Nursing
• Domestics
• Allied Health Professions
• Portering
• Medical
• Ward pharmacists
• Phlebotomists
The inspection team may visit any wards and departments in Crosshouse, including outpatients, theatres and A&E. We will not be notified in advance which areas they will be attending. Therefore it is essential that managers ensure that all staff from the groups listed above attend one of the sessions.

To find out more information and book places please contact: Lorraine Ferguson, Infection Control Office Manager, 46 Lister St, Crosshouse Hospital

For further information on the Inspection please contact Frances Lafferty, Senior Infection Control Nurse or any member of the Infection Control Team.

For further information about HEI, its inspection visits, and methodology and audit tools, visit http://www.nhshealthquality.org/nhsqis/6710.140.1366.html.

For more information about our local action plans to support implementation and improvement, contact Karen Darling, Head of Governance Support, at Crosshouse Hospital.

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Tell us what you think... If you would like to comment on any issues raised by this Stop Press, please complete the form and return it to: Communications Department, 28 Lister Street, Crosshouse. You can also email us at comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk or comms@aapct.scot.nhs.uk. If you provide your contact details, we will acknowledge your comments and pass them to the appropriate departments for a response.

Name and department (optional)

Comments

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