NHS
Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Reducing the risk of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infection in higher-risk care areas

Protecting patients more vulnerable to infection

Introduction

This leaflet explains what *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is and the measures we take to help protect patients from infection in higher risk care areas (which we call augmented care). It also explains how you can help reduce the risk while you are in hospital.

What is *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*?

*Pseudomona*s is a type of bacteria that is commonly found in water, soil and damp places. It can also be found in taps, shower heads, face flannels and sponges.

Most healthy people do not become ill from it.

Some patients are more vulnerable to infection because of their illness, treatment or the medical devices they need, such as drips and catheters. An infection can occur in the chest, urine, skin or bloodstream.

How are *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections prevented while in hospital?

We take several measures to reduce the risk of infection, including keeping the environment clean and reducing contact between vulnerable patients and potentially contaminated water.

In hospital, the following safety measures are taken:

- All the water outlets are kept clean and free from limescale to prevent contamination.
- The hand wash basin in your room is for hand washing only and should not be used for anything

else. The nurse will explain where you can safely brush your teeth and wash your face.

- Taps and showers are flushed daily to reduce the risk of bacteria building up in the higher risk care areas.
- The temperature of the water is checked weekly. This is to make sure the water is not at a temperature where bacteria can grow easily.
- We encourage and provide disposable wipes for washing rather than using flannels.
- We advise patients to use a clean towel every day.
- We provide hand wipes and alcohol hand rub, which can be used after washing your hands with soap and water.
- Before taking a shower, you will be given waterproof dressings or protector on any wounds or devices at risk of infection, if you do not have these from home.
- Water samples are regularly tested from the taps and showers for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in higher risk care areas. If test results are positive, the affected tap or shower will have a filter fitted to stop the bacteria from passing through.

Showering and bathing alternatives

If you cannot or do not wish to shower while in hospital your nurse can give you a packet of pre-moistened wipes for your personal use.

What can you do to help in hospital?

- Tell your nurse if your dressing falls off, becomes loose or gets wet.
- Let your nurse know if you need help protecting intravenous lines, wounds or dressings when you are showering or bathing/washing.
- Use the disposable dry wipes for washing; do not use flannels.
- Do not put anything over the taps or showerhead in your room, as this makes flushing and cleaning difficult.
- Use the hand wash basin for hand washing only. Do not drink this water or use the basin for personal washing.
- Tell your nurse if you notice that your shower is leaking, the shower head is loose or if the water filter is loose or has fallen off.
- If you have any concerns over the cleanliness of your room, tell your nurse.

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