



Cystic Fibrosis: Infection Prevention Guidelines

This information sheet helps patients with cystic fibrosis (CF) and their families understand what Boston Children's Hospital is doing to prevent infection during a hospital stay.

What do we know about infections in patients with cystic fibrosis (CF)?

There is evidence that bacteria (germs) present in the airways of individuals with CF may be passed from one person with CF to another. This can happen through close social contact or by sharing food utensils or objects that come in contact with respiratory secretions.

People with CF may carry different types of bacteria in their airways for months before it can be found in sputum or throat cultures.

What is Boston Children's doing to prevent the spread of infection among patients with CF?

Boston Children's Hospital has strict infection prevention steps to follow that are based on the recommendations of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Precautions

"Precautions" is the word that hospitals use for ways in which staff, parents and visitors can protect themselves and prevent germs from spreading to others.

Enhanced Contact Precautions

Boston Children's has guidelines that include Enhanced Contact Precautions for all patients with CF. The main goal of Enhanced Contact Precautions is to prevent any contact with the respiratory secretions of other patients with CF. Following these guidelines can prevent the spread of many types of bacteria that can cause infections in people with CF such as *Burkholderia cepacia* complex, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

What does it mean if my child is on "Enhanced Contact Precautions" at Boston Children's?

These are guidelines that must be followed when on Enhanced Contact Precautions at Boston Children's. These guidelines are for the safety of all patients with CF.

- **Stay in a single room:** You will be in a single room during every hospital stay.
- **Leave room for medical reasons only:** You can only leave your room for medical reasons, such as tests and procedures.
- **Supervision:** A staff member must go with you when you need to leave your room.
- **Wear a mask:** You are asked to wear a mask when entering the hospital and leaving your room.
- **No visiting:** You are not able to visit other patients in the hospital.
- **Avoid common areas:** You must avoid going to common areas, such as the cafeteria, stores in the lobby and activity/resource rooms.
- **Guidelines for outpatient visits:** Patients with CF coming back to the hospital for outpatient visits should go straight to clinic.

What can I expect of staff members?

When on Enhanced Contact Precautions, you can expect the following from our staff:

- **Hand hygiene and personal protective equipment:** All hospital staff should do proper hand washing, and should gown and glove before going in your room.
- **Meal trays arrive outside of your room:** Dietary staff drop off and pick up meal trays from a table at the doorway outside of your room.

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What if I don't want to follow these precautions?

We expect everyone to follow these infection prevention guidelines. They are for the safety of all patients with CF. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak with your nurse or doctor.

What precautions can I take during clinic visits?

Your appointments to CF clinic are made so you can arrive "just in time." The staff will show you to an exam room right away to avoid contact with other patients with CF.

Masks

Masks should be worn by all CF patients when coming into the hospital.

Masks can be found:

- At the front desk in the Main Lobby
- In ambulatory clinic areas

Blue Pass

Patients with CF will have a "blue pass" to show to check-in staff at all other Boston Children's clinic and testing locations. The blue pass lets check-in staff know when a patient with CF has arrived. It also helps them to manage waiting rooms to prevent any close contact between patients with CF.

Blue passes are available in the CF clinic.

Inpatient and Common Areas

Patients with CF **should not enter or visit inpatient areas** in the hospital during clinic visits. Patients with CF should also not socialize or meet with other patients in any common areas of the hospital.

What are some other things you should always do to prevent infection, whether inside or outside of the hospital?

The following are some things you do that can help to keep a child with CF healthy:

- **Keep some distance:** Maintain a body's length distance (6 feet) from other people with CF.
- **Wash hands:** Wash hands after coughing or sneezing, before leaving a room and before using any equipment.
- **Carry alcohol hand sanitizer:** It is a good idea to carry a small container of an alcohol hand sanitizer (for example, Purell®) in your pocket for times when a sink is not around.
- **Cover coughs or sneezes:** Carry tissues to cover coughs and sneezes. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- **Do not share personal items:** Do not share personal items, such as glasses, cups, utensils, toys, nebulizers or metered dose inhalers.
- **Take preventative steps to stay healthy:** Get an annual flu shot.
- **Clean:** Make sure to clean and disinfect your nebulizer equipment as told by your CF team.

For more information

Your Boston Children's health care team can answer questions about infection prevention.

A [**Spanish**](#) version of this information sheet is available from your provider