

“Ten Things Patients Should Know” Series

KEEP YOUR HOSPITAL ROOM SAFE AND CLEAN

1. **ASK FOR A PRIVATE ROOM**, if possible, since recent studies suggest that sharing a room can place patients at a greater risk of infection.
2. **WASH YOUR HANDS** and ask staff and visitors to do the same. Be sure to wash hands before and after eating meals and using the rest room.
3. **ASK STAFF TO WIPE THE ROUND END OF THE STETHOSCOPE** before it touches you since it may carry pathogens from other patients. Be sure that doctors' ties do not touch your clothing or bedding. Both of these items are known sources of potentially harmful bacteria.
4. **COVER YOUR MOUTH WHEN SNEEZING** and have tissue handy.
5. **VISITORS SHOULD NOT SIT ON THE BED** or put their purses or other items on the bedding.
6. **WIPE DOWN SURFACES** including TV remote, IV pump, bed rails, door handles, light switches and bed controls using a hospital level disinfectant and wearing gloves and a mask.
7. **FLOORS** should be cleaned and disinfected daily – especially if there has been blood or other infectious substances spilled. A disposable microfiber mopping pad is preferred over a string mop, which can be difficult to disinfect. Watch for spills since many falls are related to wet floors.
8. **CURTAINS** can harbor harmful bacteria so ask that visibly soiled curtains be cleaned or changed. Curtains should be changed after an infectious patient has used the room.
9. **BATHROOM ACCESS/USE OF A COMMUNE** is an important safety consideration since many accidents happen in the restroom. Consider using a bedside commode if the patient is incontinent, experiencing diarrhea, or at risk of falling.
10. **EQUIPMENT FROM OTHER ROOMS** can be a source of harmful bacteria. Ask for your own disposable blood pressure cuff to be left in your room and your own thermometer. IV pumps and other shared equipment should be thoroughly disinfected before entering your room.