

## Useful websites

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.sunderland.nhs.uk/chs](http://www.sunderland.nhs.uk/chs)

# HANDLING SOILED LAUNDRY

## INFORMATION FOR RELATIVES AND CARERS



This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

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Control of Infection Department

City Hospitals Sunderland

## Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to provide information and advice to relatives and carers who take laundry home to wash from a relative or dependant who is a patient in hospital. When dealing with used laundry e.g. nightwear, underwear or other clothing, the risk of infection to healthy people is minimal.

However, it is sensible to take some good **basic** hygiene precautions when handling laundry that is soiled or laundry from a patient with a known or potential infection.

Please note that there is a supply of nightwear/underwear available for use, provided by City Hospitals Sunderland. If your relative or the person you are caring for would like to use this facility, please discuss this with the named nurse or ward manager.

## Basic steps to follow

- Staff at the hospital should ideally have placed the soiled or contaminated laundry into a grey plastic property bag for you to take home.
- Before dealing with the laundry, cover any cuts or skin abrasions on your hands with a waterproof plaster.
- Empty the soiled or contaminated laundry directly from the bag into the washing machine. Try to prevent directly handling the soiled or contaminated laundry. Ideally you should wear protective rubber gloves e.g. household type gloves, and use them only for the purpose of carrying out this task.
- Once you have removed the laundry from this bag, the bag should be disposed of into your household waste.

- If the outside of your washing machine becomes soiled, wipe it clean as soon as possible using paper tissue and a general purpose cleaning product.
- Wash the laundry on a separate cycle. DO NOT add other items to the load.
- Wash clothing on the hottest temperature suitable for the fabric. A biological powder/liquid is preferable.
- Wash your gloved hands with soap and running water, rinse and remove the gloves.
- WASH YOUR HANDS AGAIN with soap and running water, rinse and dry them thoroughly before carrying out any other tasks e.g. eating and drinking.
- If you have a tumble dryer and the fabric is suitable –dry on the hottest cycle appropriate. Otherwise thoroughly air dry prior to ironing.
- Once dry, iron on the hottest setting suitable for the fabric.

## Where can you go for further advice and information?

Understanding infection can be complicated and a worry to us all. This leaflet may not cover all the questions you may have. If this is the case you can get further advice and information by:

- Asking the Ward Manager, a Matron or a member of your Healthcare Team.
- Asking to speak to one of the Infection Prevention & Control Matrons.
- Visiting or contacting the Patient Advice and Liaison Service based on B Floor near to Main Reception (telephone no 5699855).