Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cleaning of patients personal clothing

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Cleaning of Patient’s Personal Clothing

Patient Information

Infection Prevention Control Department

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Introduction

This leaflet has been written for relatives and friends who may be responsible for the home cleaning of clothing of a friend or relative whilst they are in hospital.

How will I carry the clothing home?

Used patient clothing will be stored in an ordinary plastic bag and can be washed on your normal wash cycle. If your friend or relative has an infection or the clothing is soiled, the clothing will be stored in a red dissolvable bag inside an ordinary plastic bag. The red bag can be placed directly into your washing machine and will dissolve in the washing machine during the washing cycle. This prevents the need for you to handle any infected or soiled clothing. If any of the red bag has not dissolved in the washing machine, it can be removed and placed in with your household waste at the end of the washing cycle. Hands should be washed after placing clothing or the red dissolvable bag into your washing machine.

Is there a risk of infection to myself or my family if I take clothing home from the hospital?

The risk of infection to you or your family is very low, but the information in this leaflet will help you handle the clothing safely.

How should I handle clothing I take home?

- Wash the clothes separately from your other laundry items, as this will reduce the risk of contamination onto other laundry.

- Avoid pre-rinsing the clothing by hand in a sink. If this is unavoidable, rinse them under water to avoid splashing and potentially spreading bacteria on to the nearby area (e.g. worktops). Clean the sink after use with your usual kitchen cleaner. Where possible, wear rubber/disposable gloves to handle contaminated clothing, and dispose of these gloves after use in your household waste.

- Wash the clothing as soon as possible on returning home using your normal washing detergent/powder/capsule/liquid.

- Take care when handling used clothing by holding them away from you, and do not shake them. Place them directly into your washing machine and wash your hands.

- Where clothing is transported from hospital in a red dissolvable bag, place this directly into the washing machine; there is no need to remove the clothing from it.

- Wash the clothing at the highest temperature the clothing will allow (follow clothing manufacturer's instructions if available). Where clothing is washed in a red dissolvable bag and on cooler temperatures, the red dissolvable bag may not fully dissolve. The remains of the red dissolvable bag can be removed at the end of the washing cycle and placed in your household waste; this will not alter the effectiveness of the clothes being cleaned, and it is safe to do so.

- Do not overload your washing machine, this ensures the clothing are washed effectively.

- Dispose of the plastic bag used to transport the clothes home in your household waste, this is not suitable to be reused as it may be contaminated.

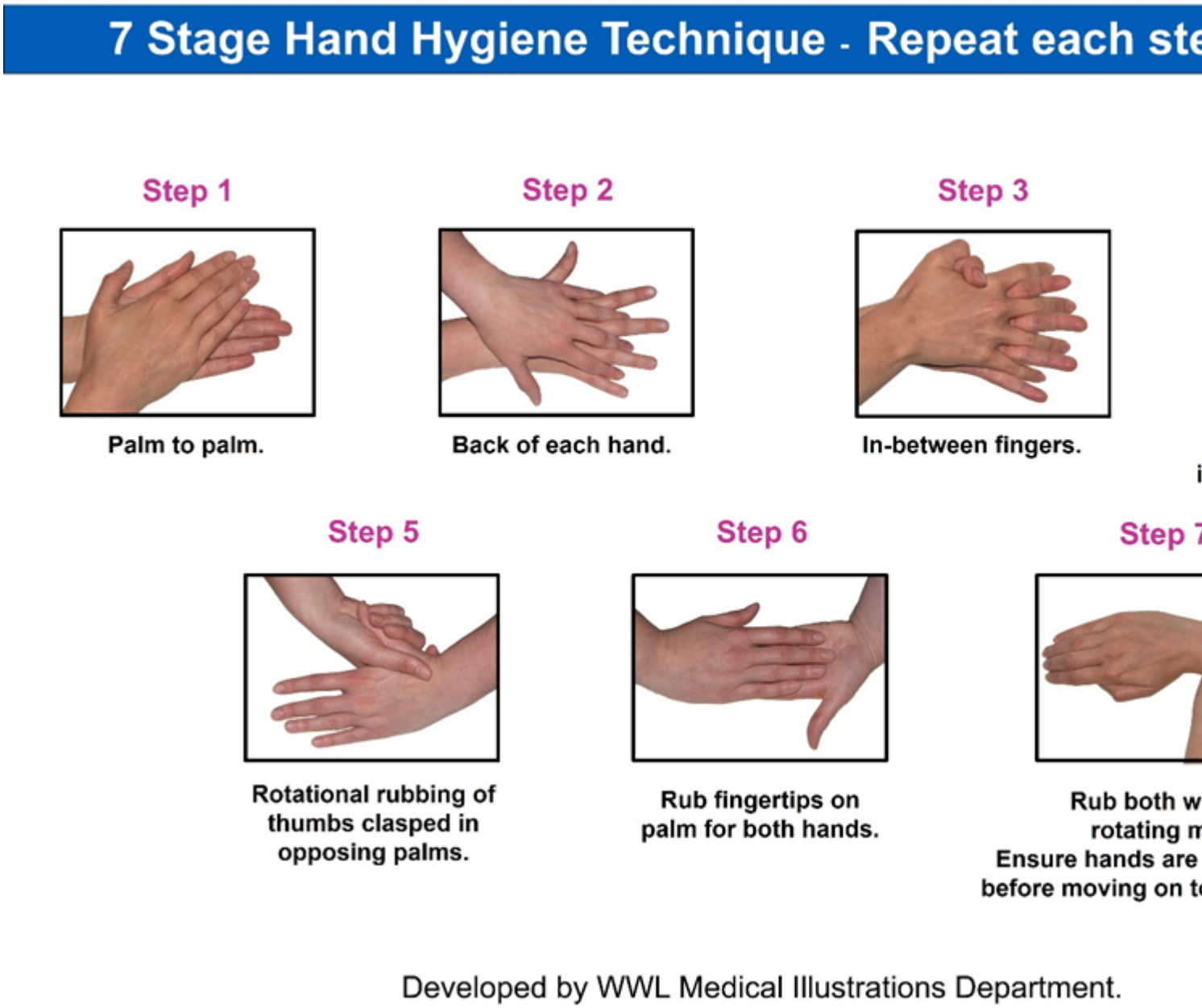
After the washing cycle has ended

- Remove the clothing and tumble dry if possible, always check with the clothing manufacturer's label to see if tumble drying is possible. If clothing cannot be tumble dried, dry as you would normally dry your clothing e.g. on a washing line or clothes horse/maiden.

- Iron the clothes as per clothing manufacturer's instructions, if possible use a hot steam iron.

Hand washing

Please wash your hands with soap and water after handling used clothing or the red dissolvable bag. A guide on the correct method of washing your hands is shown below:



Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff.



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