



Laundering of patient clothing

This leaflet gives advice on how to launder patient clothing in order to kill germs and reduce the risk of infection.

Used / worn clothing

- Wearing normal household gloves put clothing directly into an empty washing machine.
- Do not mix hospital worn clothing with articles of household clothing.
- Wash clothing at the highest temperature the clothes can safely tolerate.
- Fabric conditioner may be used as normal.

Soiled (dirty) clothing

- If clothes have become dirty with bodily fluids, i.e. blood, faeces (poo) or urine, treat as above, wearing normal household gloves and placing clothing directly into the machine.
- If your washing machine has a pre-wash setting, wash the garments on this programme first.
- When the pre-wash is finished, wash the clothing again on a normal wash cycle at the highest temperature the fabric can tolerate, in order to kill any germs still present.

Hand hygiene

Always wash hands thoroughly after handling used clothing / bedding and after removal of gloves. This prevents germs contaminating your hands.

Drying clothing

Warm tumble drying helps with the infection control process by killing bugs and germs. Ensure the fabric can tolerate tumble drying.

Ironing

Hot ironing also helps to kill germs. Ensure the fabric can tolerate hot ironing.

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your nurse for further information or you can contact the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Infection Control team on 0118 322 6914, email: infection.control@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Simon Wells, RBFT Infection Prevention & Control, November 2024. Next review due: November 2026