Why am I in isolation?

You may have some questions about why you have been placed in a room by yourself, or you may be feeling lonely, upset or a little afraid. This information sheet will hopefully answer some of the questions you have about being placed in isolation.

From time to time in hospitals, germs (such as bacteria and viruses) can be present in the body, or cause infection or illness in a patient.

It is important to reduce the risk of spreading these germs to others, so sometimes it is necessary to care for patients in a room by themselves.

It is not always possible to tell how long you will need to be isolated for. The doctors and nurses on the ward will be able to inform you of your progress, and let you know when isolation can cease or when you can be discharged. Your isolation may only last a few days but sometimes it may be necessary to isolate you for longer.

Will my care change?

Depending on why you are in isolation, staff may be required to wear gloves, gowns or a mask when they come into your room.

This is all part of normal hospital procedure to help stop harmful germs being passed on to other patients, visitors or staff.

How can I help myself?

We ask you to stay in your room unless a member of staff advises you otherwise.

If it is necessary for you to undergo investigations, procedures or treatments in another department, then you will be advised of this and taken to the relevant location. Being in isolation should not delay your tests or appointments.

If you do leave your room, please wash your hands or use the hand rub provided.

Should you require any help or assistance there is a call button by the bed, which you can press to request a nurse to come to your room.

Your meals will be delivered outside your room. Healthcare workers (for example, your nurse) will bring it inside for you. If there is a delay in your meal being bought into your room, please ring your call bell for assistance.
Infection Prevention
The Alfred
55 Commercial Road,
Melbourne VIC 3004
Tel: (03) 9076 3919
alfredhealth.org.au

Any questions?
If you would like further information, please contact the Alfred Health Infection Prevention on (03) 9076 3139.

Further information:
Deptartment of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
www.health.vic.gov.au

Do not be afraid to ask questions. Remember that staff are here to help you and want you to be as comfortable and informed about your care as possible. It is good for you to be involved in your care and treatment.

Can my friends and relatives visit me?
You can have friends and relatives visit. They will need to seek advice from your nurse about any extra precautions they may need to take before seeing you, such as wearing a mask or gloves. All visitors should wash their hands prior to visiting. They should not visit other patients after visiting you.

During outbreaks of infection, it may be necessary to restrict visitors to certain areas of the hospital in the interest of safety.

If a visitor is feeling unwell, has diarrhoea, vomiting, or flu-like symptoms, they may pose a risk to vulnerable patients in hospital. It is important that visitors do not come to the hospital until after their symptoms have resolved.

What will happen when I go home?
Whilst in hospital, you may be cared for in isolation because other patients on the ward have invasive devices such as intravenous lines, catheters and drain tubes that make them vulnerable to infection.

If you are at home, there is no need to do anything out of the ordinary. This is because family members and friends are generally well, and are not at a high risk of infection.

If you are still having visits from a home nurse or other health care worker, they may take some extra precautions. This is only because they need to protect other patients in their care.

References
Victorian Department of Health