

WASHING PATIENT CLOTHES AT HOME

INFORMATION FOR HOSPITALS, CARE HOMES AND PEOPLE WHO WASH A FRIEND'S OR RELATIVE'S CLOTHES AT HOME

Sometimes it may be necessary for staff in hospitals and care homes to ask a relative or friend of a patient/resident to wash clothes at home. This leaflet gives advice to anyone who washes their friend's or relative's clothing at home.

The risk of infection when washing patient clothes at home is low, and following the information in this leaflet will help you to handle the clothes safely.

The staff caring for your relative/friend should tell you the main things that you should be doing but if you are unclear or concerned please ask the nurse in charge for more information.

- The clothes will be given to you to take home inside a tied plastic bag.
- Before dealing with any dirty clothes, cover any cuts or skin sores on your hand and lower arms with waterproof plasters.
- Put on a pair of household rubber gloves before removing the clothes from the plastic bag. Put the clothes directly from the plastic bag into the washing machine, keeping them away from your body.
- Try to avoid handling or sorting the clothes. Do not shake them. Do not soak them or hand wash them.
- Put the plastic bag into your household waste bin immediately you have emptied it.
- Wash these clothes separately from other laundry you may have, and don't overload the washing machine.

- Before taking off the rubber gloves, wash them with soap and warm water. Then wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, after taking off the rubber gloves.
- If the outside of the machine becomes soiled when loading it, clean it with a general purpose cleaner and put the cleaning cloth in the bin when finished. Wear rubber gloves when doing this, and wash your hands with soap and warm water afterwards.
- Use your normal washing powder/liquid in the washing machine.
 - Wash the clothes using the highest temperature possible as per the care instructions on the label.
 - Tumble dry the clothes where possible as per the care instructions. Otherwise, thoroughly air dry on a washing line or clothes horse.
 - When dry, iron on the hottest setting as per care instructions on the label.
 - Take the clothes back to the patient in a clean bag.