

Consumer information

Cystic fibrosis: Infection prevention & control general principles

What is Cystic fibrosis (CF)? / How do people get CF?

Cystic fibrosis is the most common genetic condition in Australia. It mainly affects the lungs and digestive system. Genetic conditions are caused by a change in a particular gene that gets passed down from parents to children.

In cystic fibrosis, there is a change to the gene that helps to control the amount of salt and water in cells. This makes mucus in the lungs and digestive system thicker and stickier than normal. While there is currently no cure, new treatments are being developed that are improving the lives of babies, children, and adults with cystic fibrosis. Life expectancy is now more than 60 years and improving every year with new therapies rapidly evolving.

Healthcare facilities infection prevention and control (IPC) basic principles:

The prevention of infection in healthcare settings providing care for CF patients includes following the principles and usual practices for IPC. These include Standard and Transmission Based Precautions e.g. hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette (covering cough and sneezes), containment of mucus, isolation or room allocation as clinically indicated, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gowns and gloves, and the cleaning and disinfection of reusable medical equipment and the environment. For further information refer to [SA Health Cystic fibrosis: Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Clinical Guideline](#).

Visiting people with CF

The principles of good basic hygiene should be followed, including hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow, and washing your hands after using a tissue). Some healthcare providers may recommend the wearing of PPE such as a mask or gown. Please speak with your health care provider.

Preventing the spread of germs that affect people with CF.

[Cystic Fibrosis South Australia](#) and SA Health recommend the following:

- > Regular hand cleaning with soap and water or use a waterless antiseptic hand rub: before eating, after coughing or handling sputum or tissues, and when using bathroom facilities.
- > Follow your health providers recommendations regarding wearing a mask, which may include attending locations such as CF clinical appointments.
- > Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue (or use your elbow) and throw used tissues away immediately after use and wash or clean your hands.
- > Do not share personal items e.g. cups, toothbrushes, razors etc.

- > Practice good personal hygiene and keep your home surfaces and equipment clean. Eating utensils, dishes, clothing and linen can be washed as normal.
- > CF patients and their family members keep up to date with immunisations / vaccinations as recommended by their health professionals. If possible, avoid people who are unwell.
- > Avoid unnecessary touching of wounds or devices such as catheters or cannulas, however, if performing self-care, always wash and disinfect your hands first.
- > If possible, avoid socialising with other persons with CF, but if unavoidable:
 - sit or stand a reasonable distance (two metres) from each other if possible.
 - Instead of shaking hands, consider a light tap on shoulder

Caring for equipment at home e.g. nebuliser or airway clearance devices

It is important that equipment is cleaned after each use, follow the advice provided by the healthcare team and manufacturer's instructions.

Where can I find more information on CF?

If you would like more information or have concerns that you need to talk to someone about, please speak to your CF Care Team, your treating doctor or the Infection Prevention and Control Unit at your local health service.

Other useful resources:

National:

- [Cystic Fibrosis Australia](#)
- [Cystic Fibrosis Australia: Standards of Care for Cystic fibrosis](#)
- [Cystic Fibrosis Australia: Reducing the Risk of Infections in Everyday Life: Information for People with Cystic Fibrosis and their carer's in Australia](#)

SA Health / South Australia:

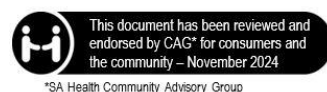
- [Cystic Fibrosis: Infection Prevention and Control Clinical Guideline](#)
- [Consumer Information: Infection Prevention and You \(whilst in the community\)](#)
- [Wash,Wipe,Cover webpage](#)
- [SA Health Cystic Fibrosis webpage](#)
- [Cystic Fibrosis South Australia webpage](#)

For more information

**Infection Control Service
Communicable Disease Control Branch
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: 08 7425 7161
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/hospitalinfections**

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