

Patient Information

Patient Clothing Bags

Information for carers: Washing patient clothing at home



Why can't the hospital wash personal clothing?

Many NHS hospitals are unable to wash personal patients clothing for the following reasons:

- The hospital linen is washed at high temperatures that are unsuitable for personal clothing and may damage the fabric
- The numbers of patients within hospitals make it extremely difficult to trace individual items of clothing
- Detergents used for the hospital linen may not be compatible with materials used for personal clothing

What is the Patient Clothing Bag (PCB)?

The Hospital has supplied a Patients Clothing Bag (PCB) which is a soluble membrane laundry bag ideal for containing clothing to be taken home for washing. Clothing is placed into the bag and the bag sealed with the attached pink tie tape.

This enables you to take the soiled clothing home and put the PCB unopened into your domestic washing machine thereby eliminating any unnecessary handling of soiled or infected garments and reducing any unpleasant odours.

During the initial wash cycle the soluble membrane and the tie tape will dissolve, releasing the contents of the bag for washing.

What does the PCB look like?

The PCB is white in colour with a wide orange stripe, designed to conform to UK guidelines HSG (95)18, with easy to follow instructions for use printed on each bag.



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Washing Advice

How do I use the PCB?

Instructions are also printed on the bag itself but please follow the following advice.

- **Do not open** the PCB as it has been designed to go straight into the washing machine on its own.
- The seam and tie will dissolve at any temperature; however it is advisable to wash at the highest temperature the clothing will tolerate.
- Use a biological powder / liquid / tablet if possible.
- When the cycle is complete, remove the plastic bag and dispose of it into your normal household waste as it is now clean.
- **Do not add other articles** of laundry to the machine. This will allow full agitation of the bag and its contents.
- **Wash your hands**
- If you have a tumble dryer and the fabric is suitable, dry on the hottest cycle appropriate. Otherwise thoroughly air dry prior to ironing. **Do not tumble dry the plastic bag.**
- Once dry, iron the clothing on the hottest setting suitable for the fabric.

If you need further advice, please speak to the nurse in charge on the ward.

Please remember:

It is advisable that, while in hospital, patients should avoid wearing clothing that needs to be washed on low temperatures, such as wool.

When dealing with used linen (nightwear, underwear or other clothing), the risk of infection to healthy people is minimal. However it is advisable to take some basic good hygiene precautions:

- Cover cuts or lesions on your hands prior to handling the laundry or wear rubber gloves if this is not possible
- Hold the laundry bag away from yourself
- Wash clothing separately from all other laundry, at the hottest wash suitable for the fabrics
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling the laundry bag



Patient Clothing Bags

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

Document Control

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