Washing soiled clothes

If your clothes are soiled with bodily fluids while you are in hospital, we will give you a patient clothing bag to place them in. This is a special bag which is safe to use in domestic washing machines, so you can take soiled clothing home to wash. You don't have to open the bag before placing it in the washing machine.

How to wash clothes in a patient clothing bag

The bag should be placed unopened into the washing machine to avoid the risk of infection.

Soaking the bag in disinfectant before washing to reduce contamination is not necessary and may bleach coloured fabrics.

To wash the clothes please follow the instructions below:

- Do not open the bag as it has been designed to be put directly into the washing machine.
- Place the sealed bag directly into the washing machine.
- Do not add other linen or clothing items to the machine.
- Use the highest temperature suitable for the fabric the clothes inside the bag are made of.
- Use a biological washing powder, liquid or tablets if possible.
- Use a pre-wash cycle before the main wash cycle.
- The seam and tie of the bag will dissolve, releasing the contents for washing.
- When the washing cycle is complete, remove the plastic bag. You can throw it away with your normal household waste as it is now clean. **Do not tumble dry the bag.**
- Dry/tumble dry and iron the clothing as normal.

You should always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling soiled clothing/bags.

Why can't the clothing be washed in hospital?

We're unable to wash patient's personal clothing for the following reasons:

- hospital linen is washed at high temperatures, using detergents which may damage the materials used for personal clothing.
- the number of patients we have makes it difficult to trace and return items of clothing.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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