

If, after reading this leaflet, you have any further questions,
please contact your doctor or discharge ward on:

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MRSA screening and treatment Patient Information Leaflet

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
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What is MRSA?

MRSA (Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is a type of bacteria that may be carried quite harmlessly by many people in their nose, throat or on their skin without causing any infection.

MRSA colonisation

People colonised with or carrying MRSA on their skin and/or nose **are not ill**. Some of us carry it for a few hours, or days, while others carry it for weeks or for their whole lives.

Most people will be unaware that they carry MRSA, because it does not harm them and they have no symptoms.

MRSA infection

MRSA can cause harm when it gets an opportunity to enter the body, for example through a cut or wound. It can cause pimples and boils, or more serious problems such as wound infections and chest infections. In more serious cases, it can cause bloodstream infections.

Why is it necessary to screen patients for MRSA?

MRSA is resistant to many of the common antibiotics used to treat infections. Therefore it may be more difficult to treat if it does cause an infection.

When doctors are aware that a patient carries MRSA they can ensure that they are given the correct antibiotics when an infection is present.

The most common way **MRSA** can spread from one person to another is on hands.

Additional information

If you have any worries or would like more information, ask your named nurse or Screening Clinic to contact a member of the Infection Prevention Team and one of us will be happy to have a chat with you.

Telephone No: 0151 430 1384 / 2452

When healthcare workers know a patient has **MRSA** they can make sure correct procedures are in place to reduce the spread of **MRSA** to other patients such as nursing them in a single room.

The Department of Health asks hospitals to screen all admissions for MRSA. If we can find out if you are carrying MRSA before you go into hospital we can use a simple treatment to get rid of as much of it as possible, before you have your surgery. This means the chances of you getting an MRSA infection, or passing MRSA on to another patient, are much smaller.

How is the screening undertaken?

Screening for **MRSA** involves taking a swab from the nose and/or throat, plus from any wounds and a sample of catheter urine and/or sputum if applicable.

A swab is a cotton bud which is placed on the area of skin to be tested (such as up your nose). The test is painless and only takes a few seconds. Your swabs/samples will be sent to a laboratory which tests them for MRSA.

Results are usually available within 2-3 days.

Please advise the Nurse taking the screen if you have a chronic chest complaint or have been identified as having MRSA in the past.

If you have previously been found to have MRSA, you will have a screen from your nose, throat, armpits, groin, perineum, plus wounds/catheter urine and/or sputum if applicable.

If newly diagnosed MRSA from nose and throat swabs you will be recalled to clinic for further screening and to be given relevant treatment

What happens next?

If **MRSA** is found on the screening samples, you will be offered a course of treatment. **Do not worry.** Lots of people carry MRSA. Carrying MRSA does not make you ill and you are not a risk to healthy people. This includes older people, pregnant women, children and babies. If your swabs (and if taken, other samples) are clear, no additional screening or treatment is necessary.

Treatment for MRSA

If you are a **previous or newly diagnosed MRSA**, you will be prescribed an antiseptic lotion e.g. Hibiscrub to use daily for 5 days as a shower gel or liquid soap when washing. This should be lathered and applied to wet skin in the bath or shower. This lotion should also be lathered into wet hair on the first and third day of treatment. Use your ordinary shampoo afterwards.

You will also be given nasal cream, to apply use a match-head sized amount, using the little finger or a cotton bud, to the inside of each nostril. Then close the nostrils by pressing the sides of the nose together for a moment. The nasal ointment needs to be applied 3 times a day. The treatment is for 5 days.

If your surgery/procedure is scheduled for a date after you have completed your first course of treatment, you will then be provided with a second course of treatment which you should commence on the day before you are due to be admitted to hospital.

Please bring the treatment into hospital on the day you are admitted so that the 5 day course can be completed.

If your surgery is imminent, you will be asked to commence your course of treatment on the day before you are due to be admitted to hospital. **Please bring the treatment into hospital on the day you are admitted so that the 5 day course can be completed.**

Pre-op staff will give further written instructions and guidance regarding each treatment and how to use.

Certain items for e.g. toothbrushes, sponges, loofahs, make-up brushes etc. can harbour MRSA. Make sure that these items are replaced when you start your treatment. Bed linen, clothes and towels should be washed on the hottest wash cycle that they will withstand. If you wear dentures make sure that these are cleaned thoroughly.

Are there any side effects to the treatment?

The treatment is usually very safe and generally any side effects will be mild, such as skin irritation. If you develop a rash, stop treatment and ask your clinic or GP for advice.

Can I still have visitors?

Yes, you can still have visitors, including children and pregnant women. You are no risk to them. But always check the rules on visiting with your Nurse. Visitors should always wash their hands and use the hand sanitiser when visiting anyone in hospital. They should do this when they enter or leave a patient's room or other areas of the hospital.

What will happen after I leave hospital?

Once you are at home, you can carry on as normal.