

Patient information

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Infection Prevention and Control Team

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus. Staphylococcus aureus are bacteria that can live harmlessly on the skin and in the nose.

These bacteria can develop resistance to methicillin (a type of penicillin) and usually to some of the other antibiotics that are normally used to treat Staphylococcus aureus infections.

Although it can be resistant to some antibiotics there are still many available that can treat MRSA infection.

Generally, MRSA will live harmlessly in the nose or on the skin, and this is called colonisation. Occasionally MRSA can cause infection if the bacteria enter the bloodstream or a wound, for example.

How did I get MRSA?

The bacteria might have been on your skin or in your nose when you came into hospital, or you may have picked it up while you have been in hospital. MRSA is only identified by a laboratory test. All patients admitted to the hospital should be tested for MRSA. This will involve a swab of the nose, groin and any wounds.

How can the spread of MRSA be prevented?

The best way of reducing the risk of spreading MRSA between people is by hand washing or using the hand gels available.

To minimise the risk of transmission to other patients, staff are required to wear aprons and gloves when caring for someone with MRSA.

If you are in a bay, you may need to be moved into a single room during your hospital stay or until you have negative MRSA screens.

Why are swabs taken?

Swabs from your nose and groin area are routinely taken on or before admission to hospital, and regularly throughout your stay.

Following an MRSA positive result, antibacterial treatments will be prescribed.

While you are in hospital further swabs will be taken at regular intervals to monitor the effect of the treatment.

How will I know if I am MRSA negative after treatment?

This would require three sets of MRSA negative swabs including a swab from the throat, and any additional sites previously positive e.g. wounds, to be taken at least a week apart.

What treatment will I get for MRSA?

The treatment for MRSA colonisation is to reduce the MRSA on your skin and in your nose, to reduce the risk of infection.

Chlorhexidine 2% washcloths will be prescribed for your body and antibacterial gel for your nose.

These treatments are to be used until otherwise advised by the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse.

Prontoderm nasal gel

- Use three times per day.
- Using a little finger, apply a small pea-size amount of Prontoderm gel in each nostril.
- Massage nostrils lightly together after application.
- Wash hands thoroughly.

Chlorhexidine wash cloths

The cloths are supplied in packs of eight. You should use one pack per day after washing or bathing. Use a separate cloth for each part of the body:

- Face.
- Arms (one per arm).
- Trunk.
- Legs and feet (one per leg).
- Groin.
- Bottom.

Further treatment using different products may be recommended by the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Can I have visitors?

Generally healthy people (including elderly people, pregnant women, children, and babies) are not at any risk from MRSA.

Visitors should clean their hands before and after visiting you.

They are not required to wear aprons and gloves when entering your room unless they are helping with your care.

If you have family or friends that are in poor health, have eczema or who have wounds etc. and may be at risk from MRSA, if you have concerns, please discuss this with the Infection Prevention and Control Nurses or your family doctor (GP).

What should I do if I am discharged home?

Ensure that you complete your current course of topical MRSA treatment if advised by the hospital.

You should continue basic hygiene measures, such as, cleaning your hands regularly, keeping wounds covered, washing bedsheets and towels, and avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, razors, clothing etc.

If you have any skin breaks, or wounds, keep them clean and covered until healed.

Will MRSA stop me carrying out normal activities at home or socialising?

Once you are discharged home there is no reason you should not continue to join in any activity that you enjoyed before coming into hospital.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

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MRSA - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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