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# MRSA

## Infection Control



If the District Nurse or any Community Healthcare Worker undertakes clinical care visits, they should wear apron and gloves while attending to you, and wash their hands afterwards.

**Remember, it's important for you to wash your hands as well.**

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### Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Clinical Nurse Lead, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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**Author:** Infection Control

**Department:** Infection Control

**Version:** 7

**Published:** April 2018

**Review:** April 2020

- Patients who have an MRSA infection will require antibiotics which your medical team will prescribe.

## Further Advice

This organism is not a risk for normal healthy people, and every-day activity is to be strongly encouraged, but we would advise that people with skin conditions keep physical contact to a minimum.

Pregnant women are at no more risk than anyone else.

## What happens if I cannot get rid of this germ?

The MRSA is likely to stay on your skin or in your nose and it will probably do you no harm.

## Advice on Discharge

Usually when patients go home it is no longer necessary to take the same precautions. You may be advised to complete a course of treatment that was started whilst you were in hospital.

Your clothes should be washed as normal on a hot domestic wash i.e. at least 60° C.

You are **not** infectious to family and friends or other healthy people with whom you have social contact.

If you go to hospital for some reason, either as an inpatient or as an outpatient, it would be greatly appreciated if you could inform the staff that you have had MRSA in the past.

# What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for  
**Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus**

Staphylococcus aureus is a very common bacterium which lives harmlessly on the skin and in the lining of a person's nose. In fact 30% of the general public carry Staphylococcus aureus (not MRSA) in their nose without knowing and come to no harm. This is known as 'colonisation'. Germs are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics and MRSA is an example of this. Meticillin is a form of the most effective antibiotic (flucloxacillin) used to treat infections caused by Staphylococcus aureus.

There are times when it can cause infection. Most commonly it causes mild infections of the skin such as spots and boils. Rarely it can cause more severe diseases such as wound infections or infection of the blood stream (septicaemia) or bones (osteomyelitis).

## Why is MRSA a problem in hospitals?

The treatment of MRSA infection is more difficult than for ordinary Staphylococcus aureus because it is resistant to the most effective antibiotic used in treating these infections.

We are particularly concerned about MRSA in hospitals for two reasons. Firstly, patients in hospital can be more vulnerable than normal to serious infections. This is because a patient's immune

system is often less effective than would be the case when that person is well and out of hospital.

Secondly, one of the most common ways for bacteria to be passed from person to person is by direct contact, particularly by one person touching another with their hands.

Patients are often very dependent on health-care professionals to look after them. This means that there is a lot of hands-on care given by healthcare professionals to patients. The risk of passing bacteria, such as MRSA, from one patient to another is therefore much greater than when people are self-caring and out of hospital.

## **Prevention**

It is important to remember that many germs, not just MRSA, are being passed from person to person all the time. This is a normal part of life.

There are certain times however, when it is important to reduce the chances of passing particular germs or infections from person to person.

Healthcare professionals take many steps to reduce the chances of any patient developing an infection while they are vulnerable in hospital, but extra care is required for some germs, such as MRSA.

Hand washing plays an important part in stopping the spread of MRSA.

## **Screening**

All elective and emergency admissions are now routinely screened, except for those in the exclusion criteria, in accordance with Department of Health (2008) guidelines.

## **Treatment**

If you are found to have MRSA, it may be necessary for us to take steps to reduce the chances of it being passed to other patients. These steps will depend on the type of ward or unit in which you are being nursed, and the other patients nearby.

Each patient is different and is assessed individually on the best course of action.

You might find that:

- You are moved into a side room. This has been shown to be effective in reducing the chances of passing MRSA to other patients.
- You are prescribed an ointment for your nose and a daily body wash. This will help eradicate or reduce the bacteria on the skin.
- When health-care professionals undertake clinical care they will wear disposable aprons and gloves. On removal they will decontaminate their hands. This is to prevent MRSA being passed to them first and then to other patients whom they might later attend. It is not usually necessary for visiting family and friends to wear aprons and gloves. Visitors must wash their hands on entering and leaving the ward or use the hand sanitiser.