

The screening and treatment of MRSA (Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)

Infection Prevention

This leaflet aims to provide patients and their visitors with information regarding Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), including routes of transmission, symptoms, treatment, infection prevention and screening precautions.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus are bacteria (germs) commonly found on the skin, particularly in areas like the nose, folds of skin, the groin and sometimes wounds.

When Staphylococcus aureus is resistant to some of the commonly used antibiotics it is known as Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus; this is commonly referred to as MRSA. The MRSA bacteria may be 'carried' on a person's skin or in their nose without causing any harm or illness. This is known as colonisation. These bacteria (like many other bacteria) are also capable of causing infection.

Who is screened for MRSA?

All emergency and elective (waiting list) patients who require admission will be screened. Swabs are taken from your nose, armpit and groin, any wounds and any medical devices you might have.

Why are we screening for MRSA?

We are screening all patients so that early identification can be made and treatment commenced if required. This should help to prevent cross contamination and the onset of possible infection. People who are colonised with MRSA do not look or feel any different. It is grown from a specimen (such as urine, blood or a swab from a site on the body, e.g. from the nose or a wound) which is sent to the laboratory for testing.

How do you get MRSA?

MRSA is found in the environment. It may be spread (passed on) via the contamination of equipment, it may also be passed from person to person often via the hands.

What happens if you have MRSA?

Inpatients

If you are in hospital you may be moved to a single room. This is to reduce the risk of bacteria being transferred to other patients who may be more vulnerable to infection. If you remain in the bay precautions will be maintained at the bedside.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

Awaiting surgery or elective admission

The Surgeon in charge of your treatment will be informed that you have MRSA and they will then decide whether it is appropriate for surgery to go ahead. In most cases there is no need to cancel surgical procedures.

What is the treatment?

Most people will be required to use a special skin wash for five days. You will also be asked to wash your hair in this wash at least twice during this five day period; a hair conditioner may be used following washing.

An antibiotic nasal ointment will also be prescribed; this is applied three times a day for five days.

You may need antibiotics if infection is suspected. Your Doctor will prescribe these.

Two days after your treatment has stopped swabs will be taken to see if the MRSA is still present.

It is important to try and use clean flannels and towels and also change bed clothes and nightwear daily if you can.

What happens after treatment if you are in hospital?

At the end of the 5th day treatment it will be stopped for 2 days. Swabs will be taken to check if the MRSA is still present but instead of waiting for the result a second treatment will be started for a further 5 days once the swabs have been obtained.

If we find you are positive for MRSA following discharge your GP and the Infection Prevention Team will be informed. Your GP or the Infection Prevention Team can then arrange any treatment that might be needed.

Can I have visitors whilst in hospital?

Visitors may attend as usual; however they will need to either wash their hands or apply alcohol gel to their hands before entering and leaving your room.

Visitors who help with the physical care of their relatives should wear gloves and aprons. The nursing team will provide these. Visitors do not need to wear gloves and aprons if they are just visiting the patient and should not be discouraged from normal social contact.

Will MRSA stop me from going home?

If you have MRSA it will not stop you from going home.

MRSA is not a health risk to healthy people; therefore a person with MRSA can mix normally with healthy family and friends. This includes pregnant women, babies and children.

There is no need for any special precautions with linen, crockery and cutlery when you are at home. These can all be washed as normal.

What can I do to help?

It is important that if you need to come back into hospital you inform the Nurses and Doctors that you have had MRSA.

Avoid any unnecessary handling of any wounds and devices such as your drip or intravenous line.

Ask your visitors not to visit you if they feel unwell themselves.

Good hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of all infections, not just MRSA. Please feel free to ask any member of staff caring for you whether they have washed their hands or used hand gel prior to delivering your care.

For further information

Please speak to the nurse or doctor caring for you.

Additional information is available from the Infection Prevention Nurses:

Infection Prevention Department

New Cross Hospital

Tel: 01902 307999

Ext: 5282

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。