

Who is at risk of MRSA infection?

- ◆ MRSA is usually confined to hospitals and in particular to vulnerable or weak patients. These include patients in intensive care units, and on surgical or orthopaedic wards.
- ◆ Some residents in nursing homes have also experienced problems with MRSA.

Will my visitors be at risk?

- ◆ MRSA does not pose a risk to **healthy** family members or visitors of an affected patient or their close social or work contacts.
- ◆ Visitors have no need to wear gloves and aprons, however, if someone is suffering from a health problem please let a member of staff know so that further advice can be given.
- ◆ It is also important that you remind your visitors that they need to clean their hands with liquid soap and water (followed by thorough drying) and then use the alcohol hand rub supplied by the hospital before leaving your side-room or bed area.

If you are re-admitted to hospital

- ◆ If you should need to be re-admitted to hospital you will be screened for carriage of MRSA.
- ◆ Single room nursing may be advised until results of the screen are known.

Who can I contact for further information?

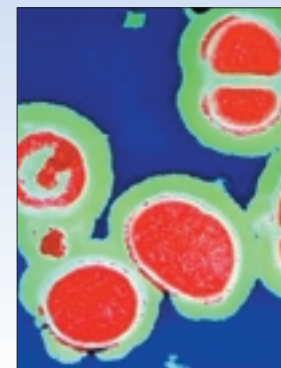
- ◆ If you have any additional questions or have any concerns, please talk these through with your named nurse. If he/she is not able to help they will be happy to make an appointment for you to see an Infection Control Nurse.

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the nursing staff during your admission to hospital.

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Date of Publication: April 2005
Ref: infecont/mrsa/ntok
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MRSA

What you need to know about Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)



What is MRSA?

- ◆ MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a variety of *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium (a germ) that is resistant to Methicillin (a type of antibiotic) and some of the other antibiotics that are usually used to treat *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- ◆ MRSA can live on our body quite harmlessly. However, it has the potential to cause infection problems if it is allowed to enter the body e.g. when the surface of the skin (that normally acts as a barrier to infection) is broken. This may be due to trauma or the need for you to have surgery, intravenous drips or other medical devices inserted.

What illnesses are caused by MRSA?

- ◆ MRSA can cause abscesses, boils, and can infect wounds – both accidental wounds such as grazes and deliberate wounds such as those made during surgery or when having a transfusion of blood or other fluids into your vein. These are called localised infections.
- ◆ It may then spread into the body and cause serious infections in the blood stream.

How is MRSA treated?

- ◆ If it is discovered that you are colonised with the bacteria i.e. carrying the bacteria on your skin or any swab or specimen without showing any signs of infection then treatment is not usually necessary.
- ◆ If treatment is considered necessary then the most frequent course consists of:
 - Mupirocin ointment applied inside the nostrils three times a day
 - An antiseptic mouthwash gargle or throat spray
 - An antiseptic body-wash (usually Hibiscrub) to be used to shower or bathe and shampoo the hair

You will need to use this treatment for 5 days.

It is important that if you have a history of dermatitis or other skin conditions to let staff know, as they will advise further on the use of an alternative body-wash.

If any of the treatment causes skin irritation STOP using it immediately and inform your named nurse.

- ◆ If MRSA is causing you an infection you will be prescribed antibiotics.

- ◆ MRSA infection is no more dangerous or virulent than other varieties of *Staphylococcus aureus* infection, however, it can be more difficult to treat because it is resistant to some antibiotics.
- ◆ It is sometimes necessary to prescribe nasal and/or throat treatment and body-washes (as described earlier) as well.
- ◆ Following admission we will try to nurse you in a single room to help reduce the risk of passing on MRSA to other patients. Staff will wear gloves and aprons and clean their hands with liquid soap and water followed by the use of an alcohol hand rub when carrying out clinical care.
- ◆ Sometimes a single room is not available in which case you will be nursed in the main ward. Gloves, aprons and hand cleansing (as described above) will still be necessary.
- ◆ Precautions will also be taken to prevent the spread of MRSA between wards/departments and other hospitals.
- ◆ If you require transfer to another hospital or investigations in another department, it will be arranged for you to go at the quietest time of the day so you come into contact with the least number of vulnerable patients.