

Future healthcare

Having MRSA should not affect your day-to-day life. You can carry on as normal.

If you visit your GP, Dentist or any other healthcare settings, please tell the staff that you have screened positive for MRSA. This will help to ensure that you are given the correct antibiotics should you need any.

MRSA

Sources of further information:

- ◆ The Infection Control Team – details below.
- ◆ Your General Practitioner (GP).
- ◆ Public Health England.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330925/MRSA_information_for_patients.pdf
- ◆ NHS Choices: MRSA -
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/mrsa/Pages/introduction.aspx>

Meticillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

Infection Prevention & Control Teams:

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tbc

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What is MRSA?

MRSA is the abbreviation for **M**eticillin-**R**esistant ***S**ta**ph**yl**o**cc**o**cc**u**s **a**ure**u**s*. It is a variety of common skin bacteria, which has become resistant to some of the more commonly used antibiotics.

In healthy people, the bacteria can live harmlessly on the skin. It can be carried for a short time (transient carriage) on skin or in the nose, or may be part of a person's skin flora (colonisation).

People both in hospital and in the community can be colonised with MRSA (approximately 2-3% of the population), and there is not always a clear reason for this.

Who is at risk from MRSA?

When MRSA has the opportunity to enter the body, it may cause infections or slow down healing and recovery. Most at risk are those having major surgery (vascular or implant surgery) and those who are very unwell and have poor immune systems.

How is MRSA spread in hospital?

MRSA is most commonly spread by hands, either after direct contact with someone who is colonised with MRSA, or after contact with equipment or close patient environment contaminated with MRSA. Therefore it is very important that everybody within the hospital has good hand hygiene, and that the hospital environment and all patient equipment is kept clean.

In the community, MRSA, as with all skin bacteria, is generally spread by direct contact.

How do I know if I have MRSA?

MRSA may be identified from specimens taken if you have an infection in the community or in hospital, such as a wound, urinary, or chest infection.

MRSA colonisation is generally identified by carrying out an 'MRSA Screen'.

If you are colonised with MRSA, and have any procedures that may cause breaks in the skin (such as surgery or intravenous line insertion) or your immunity is reduced, you may be at higher risk of acquiring an infection with MRSA.

Identifying colonisation with MRSA can mean actions are taken to reduce the risk of you acquiring an infection with MRSA.

Hospitals require people to be screened for MRSA before certain operations (such as orthopaedics) and also screen some groups of people who are at higher risk of carrying MRSA (e.g. patients with broken skin, transfers from other hospitals & overseas hospitals), to reduce the risk of the bacteria spreading to other patients.

What happens if I screen MRSA positive?

If your screen is MRSA positive, MRSA 'suppression therapy' may be recommended if you are staying in hospital or are booked for an elective admission to hospital. MRSA suppression therapy consists of using a prescribed body wash for 5 days, and a topical antibiotic cream, which is applied to the inner surface of your nose.

If you are not going into hospital, MRSA suppression therapy will probably not be needed (as it generally only reduces the MRSA carriage for a short period of time; it does not get rid of the MRSA).

Please speak to your Practice Nurse, GP or other healthcare staff for more information)

Can MRSA infections be treated?

MRSA is **not** resistant to all antibiotics. Local or more serious infections may still be treated with antibiotics.

If I have MRSA, is this a risk to my family and friends?

MRSA does not pose a risk to healthy individuals, which includes babies, children, and pregnant women. It can affect hospital patients, and those with significant health conditions, and those with chronic skin conditions or open wounds.

Good hand hygiene is vital in reducing the risk of spreading infections to others.