

## More Information

Treatment for MRSA should not affect treatment of your original medical condition.

Friends and family are not at risk from MRSA, as it does not normally affect healthy people. It is safe for pregnant women to have contact with someone who has MRSA.

Providing that you are clinically fit, the presence of MRSA will not delay discharge to either your home, residential or nursing home. Only staff involved in your health care need to know that you have MRSA, including your district nurses, your GP and nursing and medical staff, who are caring for you during your hospital stays or at home.

If you have ever had MRSA in the past, tell the doctors and nurses (both in hospital and in the community) because it helps in planning your care correctly.

**For more advice please do not hesitate to ask a nurse on your ward.**

### More information:

Department of health "A Simple Guide to MRSA"

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).

NHS Direct – Telephone: 0845 4647 [www.nhsdirect.co.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.co.uk)

Health Protection Agency – [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

**Provide**

## MRSA



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## What is MRSA?

### **MRSA** stands for **Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus**.

Staphylococcus Aureus is a germ that lives on our bodies. MRSA is a type of Staphylococcus Aureus that is resistant to more commonly used antibiotics and can cause infections that can be more difficult to treat.

Most of the time MRSA just sits on the skin without causing a problem but if it enters the body through an open wound, (for example following an injury or a surgical operation) it can cause infection.

### **Where does MRSA come from and how is it spread?**

Approximately 30% of the population carry Staphylococcus Aureus on their skin or in their nose without becoming aware of it. Some of these people will also carry the resistant MRSA strain without being aware of it.

It can be spread via hands and from the environment. When hands have been in contact with MRSA and are not washed thoroughly then MRSA can be passed on by touch to the next person.

## What are the symptoms?

Most people with MRSA are 'colonised' and will have no symptoms, the bacteria is simply 'sitting on the skin' but is causing no harm to the person. If you have an MRSA infection and the bacteria are causing signs of infection, for example, pus discharging from a wound or a fever, then you will be given treatment for this infection.

### **How is MRSA diagnosed and how is it treated?**

Swabs are taken from your nose and groin and sent to the laboratory to test if MRSA is present. In our Community Hospitals this will be done routinely by the ward nurse on admission. It is a painless procedure.

If you have tested positive for MRSA, you will be asked to wash your body and hair with an antiseptic wash and put an antiseptic ointment inside your nose. This will be explained to you by the nurse caring for you. If you are clinically unwell with an MRSA infection you will be treated with antibiotics as well as the antiseptic wash and ointment.

### **How will you be cared for in hospital?**

All staff are trained in preventing the spread of infection and this includes MRSA. If you have tested positive for MRSA, your individual care needs will be assessed to determine the level of barrier nursing that will be required.



Hospital staff take special 'barrier' precautions to help stop MRSA spreading to other patients. Please ask your nurse to explain these to you.

All staff will wear protective clothing (gloves and aprons) when helping with your personal care. It is advisable for your visitors to wear gloves and aprons if they help with your care. Otherwise, it is not necessary for your carers to wear gloves, for example, if they are talking to you or handling your food.

All staff will follow appropriate hand washing with soap and water or alcohol gel, before and after helping with your care.

### **How you can help to prevent the spread of MRSA?**

-  Please use treatments as prescribed.
-  Please pay strict attention to hand washing before you eat and after toileting.
-  Please remind your friends and family to wash their hands after they have visited your room and before leaving the ward.