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MRSA: Antenatal Screening

Your Questions Answered

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email pals@asph.nhs.uk. If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email complaints@asph.nhs.uk

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MRSA: Antenatal Screening

Your Questions Answered

This leaflet is intended to give you additional information to that received from a healthcare professional.

Introduction

Staphylococcus aureus (SA) is a bacterium that normally lives on the skin particularly the nose, skin folds, hairline and perineum of approximately 30% of the population. It commonly survives in these areas without causing infection – a state known as colonisation. ***Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)*** is a type of SA which is resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics. MRSA can also live harmlessly on the skin and is found in about 5% of the population.

Why should I be screened for mrsa?

- It is a myth that you can only catch MRSA in hospital. MRSA also exists in the community.
- People can become carriers of MRSA in the same way that they become a carrier of any other bacteria: by physical contact with the organism. MRSA can be found in hospital environments but can also be brought into hospital by patients and visitors. Therefore it is essential we identify those who are colonised (present without causing harm) with MRSA prior to admission. From 2009 all elective patients undergoing surgery are required to be MRSA screened (DoH 2008) including all elective Caesarean Sections.

Who should be screened?

- All pregnant women where a plan is for them to have an elective Caesarean Sections.
- All pregnant women who are previous MRSA carriers.
- Pregnant women transferred from other hospitals who are going to be an inpatient.

When should I be screened?

- Screening will be undertaken at the booking of the elective caesarean section.

Screening

- Verbal consent will be obtained and documented in your maternal hand held notes.
- Swabs moistened in sterile saline will be taken from your nose and groin.
- The laboratory takes approximately 24-48 hours to process the specimen.
- You will only be notified of a **positive** result.

What happens if I am MRSA positive?

- If you are found to be a carrier of MRSA you will be contacted and asked to return to the antenatal clinic where you will be prescribed a special solution to wash your body and hair and a nasal ointment for your nose. An information leaflet will be

given to you and the process explained. Following treatment the screening process will be repeated.

Can I do anything to help prevent MRSA transmission in the health care setting?

- MRSA and other hospital acquired infections are usually passed on by human contact via the hands. This is why hand hygiene is so important. Please encourage your visitors to wash and dry their hands. If preferred alcohol hand gel may be used as an alternative to decontaminate **clean** hands.

Further Information

Should you have any further questions or require further advice please contact your midwife or the antenatal clinic.