

MRSA

Patient information leaflet

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a common germ which many people carry on their skin without being aware and without causing any problems. Some strains of Staphylococcus aureus are resistant to commonly used antibiotics and these strains are called Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). The germs are the same, regardless of whether they can or cannot be easily treated with antibiotics.

Where is it found?

Staphylococcus aureus can be found on many parts of the body but is usually found in the nose and groins.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with Staphylococcus aureus, including the antibiotic-resistant strains (MRSA), will have no signs or symptoms, as it will be present on their skin harmlessly.

Staphylococcus aureus, including the antibiotic-resistant strains (MRSA), can sometimes cause a range of infections, from mild skin infections such as boils, to more serious wound infections or occasionally blood stream infections. Symptoms can vary according to the type of infection. For example, if you have a wound infection, symptoms may include redness, inflammation, increased pain, poor wound healing and pus.

If the infection spreads to your blood or lungs, symptoms may include a high temperature, difficulty breathing, chills, dizziness and confusion.

If you are concerned, you should seek further advice. In hospital speak to the doctors and nurses caring for you. When you return home and are concerned, speak to your General Practitioner, call 911 or go to A&E depending on the urgency of your symptoms.



How is it spread?

Staphylococcus aureus, including the antibiotic-resistant strains (MRSA), is spread mainly from person to person when we touch each other or from touching surfaces with the germs on them. This is why hand hygiene is very important, to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA (and other germs) in hospitals.

Why is MRSA a concern in hospitals (and other places where healthcare is delivered)?

In most people, MRSA is present on the skin harmlessly without causing any ill health. In hospitals (and other places where healthcare is delivered) it may cause an infection in some people who are already unwell and vulnerable. People most at risk are those with large open wounds, those with a low immune system and those with medical devices such as intravenous drips or urinary catheters.

How do you test for MRSA?

For patients who need to be tested for MRSA, a swab is taken from the nose and groins, any wounds and broken skin, devices and, if present, catheter sample of urine. The swabs are tested in the laboratory to find out whether MRSA is present.

What happens if I am found to have MRSA?

Whilst in hospital, we will care for you in a single room, if possible, to reduce the risk of spreading the germs to other patients. Sometimes, if a single room is not available, we will care for you in your bedspace in a multi-bed bay, in which case we ask you to stay by your bed and not to walk around the ward. This is to reduce the risk of spreading the germs to other patients.

You will be prescribed a nasal ointment and an antiseptic skin cleanser for washing/showering, to reduce the risk to you and others from developing an MRSA infection.

If you do have an MRSA infection, as well as the nasal ointment and skin cleanser, your doctor will also prescribe antibiotics to treat the infection. They will monitor you, to check that your infection is improving.





If nursed in a single room, when can I return to an open ward?

If you need continuing care in hospital, you will need to have three sets of consecutive negative swabs before you can return to the open ward and mix with other patients. This is to make sure you are negative for MRSA, so it isn't spread to other patients.

How can I find out more about MRSA?

If you are unsure about what has been said to you about MRSA or would like further information, ask the nurse-in-charge or speak to your doctor. If you need any specific information and your doctor or nurse are unsure, they can speak to the Infection Prevention and Control Team or arrange for the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse to come and see you.

Will having MRSA stop me going home?

No. When you are medically fit for discharge, you will be able to go back home. MRSA by itself is not a reason for you to stay in hospital.

What happens when I go home?

There will be no restrictions to your work and social life. At home you will not be a risk to your family, friends, older people, pregnant women, children or babies. It is very important to understand that social contact with your family should continue as normal.

If you have sick relatives at home continue using good personal and hand hygiene, as you would normally.

If it is necessary for you to be readmitted to hospital, you will be swabbed for MRSA again to check if you still have the germs.

What should I do if I have any queries about MRSA when I go home?

You should consult your General Practitioner, or further information is also available on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mrsa/>



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 Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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