

Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Patient Information Leaflet

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a very common germ which many people carry on their skin without any problems or infections developing. Some strains are resistant to particular antibiotics and these strains are referred to as Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Both MRSA and *Staphylococcus aureus* can sometimes be carried by patients in hospital.

Where is it found?

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

Are there any symptoms if I have MRSA?

This germ is often present without any symptoms. When it does cause an infection, symptoms may include boils, abscesses or wound infections.

Why is MRSA a concern in hospitals?

In the majority of cases, MRSA is found to be a colonisation, which means that it can live on the skin and does not cause an infection. However, occasionally it may, like all other germs, cause an infection which can be difficult to treat.

How does MRSA spread from person to person?

MRSA is spread mainly by touch so hand washing is very important to reduce MRSA in hospitals.

How will you find out if I am carrying MRSA if I have no signs or symptoms?

A swab is usually taken from the nose and groin. This is then tested in the laboratory to establish whether MRSA is present.

What happens if I am found to have MRSA?

If possible a single room is found for you in the hospital. You may be prescribed a nasal ointment and an antiseptic skin cleanser for washing/showering. We will also ask if we can take further swabs. Patients who are isolated because of MRSA will be seen by an Infection Prevention nurse to discuss the effect of having MRSA.

Why would I be nursed in a single room if I have MRSA?

This is to try and prevent the germ being passed on to other patients. Whilst in the single room, you will be given treatment to try and get rid of the germ. It is important that visitors and staff who are caring for you remember to wash their hands before leaving the room.

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 consecutive negative screens at weekly intervals, before you can return to the open ward and mix with other patients.

How can I find out more regarding MRSA?

If you are unsure about what has been said to you about MRSA, ask a member of staff to arrange for the Infection Prevention Nurse to come and see you.

What happens when I go home?

The Infection Prevention nurse will advise you before your discharge regarding further treatment if required.

If you are told that you are carrying MRSA, there should 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 good personal and hand hygiene as usual.

MRSA is not itself a reason for you to be kept in hospital.

If it is necessary for you to be readmitted to hospital in the near future, the Infection Prevention Team may arrange for you to have further treatment.

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

You should consult your General Practitioner or further information on <http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

Contact details

Infection Prevention Team

University Hospital of South Manchester

Wythenshawe Hospital

Southmoor Road

Wythenshawe

M23 9LT

Telephone number: 0161 291 2630

Further information can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

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