

Infection Prevention and Control

Pre-operative M.R.S.A. screening information for patients

This information is designed for patients undergoing MRSA screening before coming into hospital for a planned operation.

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust takes MRSA and healthcare associated infections extremely seriously. We are committed to reducing infections in our hospitals and giving our patients high quality health care.

Why do we screen for MRSA?

There are many people in the community who may have the MRSA germ without showing any symptoms. By screening (performing a simple swab test) before your operation, we can find out who is carrying the germ and provide treatment for you before you are admitted to hospital.

As part of the pre-operative process, patients will be routinely screened for MRSA. This helps to prevent the spread of the germ and lowers the risk of complications occurring because of it whilst you are recovering.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for **(M)** Meticillin **(R)** Resistant **(S)** Staphylococcus **(A)** Aureus.

There are lots of germs on our skin and in the environment around us. Most of them are harmless, some are beneficial and a very small proportion can cause harm.

Staphylococcus Aureus is a common germ that is found on the skin and in the nostrils of about a third of healthy people. It can cause infections. MRSA are varieties of Staphylococcus Aureus that have developed resistance to Meticillin (a type of penicillin) and some other antibiotics that are used to treat infections.

How can MRSA affect me?

MRSA may colonise your body and/or cause infection.

MRSA Colonisation

Most people who have MRSA are colonised. This means that MRSA is present on the surface of the skin and does not cause any harm to the person. People who are colonised will have no signs or symptoms of infection and feel well.

However, if you come into hospital to undergo a procedure, there may be an opportunity for MRSA to enter the body. This is why patients found to be colonised with MRSA will be given a skin wash to remove the germ from the skin and nasal ointment to remove MRSA from the nose.



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MRSA Infection

MRSA may cause harm when it gets an opportunity to enter the body. MRSA can cause simple infections such as pimples, boils or more serious problems such as wound infections, chest infections or blood stream infections (septicaemia). If a patient has an infection caused by MRSA then there are a number of antibiotics that can be given that are effective in treatment of MRSA.

What tests are done to look for MRSA?

The nurse will take a swab from your nose and other skin sites depending on the type of surgery you are having. This involves a cotton bud swab being placed in and around your nose or on surfaces of your skin or wounds. The test will not hurt but might feel a little uncomfortable.

The swab/s is then sent to the laboratory for testing.

How long will the swab results take?

The results usually take three to four working days.

What happens next?

If your swabs are found to be MRSA negative (this means **no MRSA** was detected) you will not hear from us. You should follow the instructions given to you about your admission to hospital for your operation.

If your swabs are found to be **MRSA positive**, (This means **MRSA was detected**) the hospital will contact you, your General Practitioner (GP) and your Consultant. You will be asked to go to your GP/Practice nurse to obtain a prescription for an antiseptic body wash to use once a day and an ointment to apply to your nostrils three times daily. Use both treatments for five consecutive days.

You will then need to contact the Practice Nurse at your GP surgery to be re-swabbed.

What happens if I still have MRSA after treatment?

If your surgery is urgent but your swab results remain positive you will be restarted on the antiseptic body wash and the nasal ointment 4-5 days prior to admission and then admitted to a side room on the ward (if available).

What if my second screen is negative?

All patients who have had one positive screen will be asked to re-start on the antiseptic body wash and nasal ointment five days before admission to hospital regardless of the result of the second screen.

What else may be done?

You will have the opportunity of discussing the risks of proceeding with surgery with a member of the clinical team.

What is the risk of proceeding with surgery if I am MRSA positive?

The risk of MRSA infection even if found to be positive is minimal, providing you follow the advice given and treat yourself using the instructions given in this leaflet.

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Treatment for MRSA

If MRSA is found you will need to use Bactroban Nasal Ointment (Mupirocin 2%). Use it three times each day for 5 days. A small amount of ointment, about the size of a match head, should be placed on a cotton bud or on your finger and applied to the inside of each nostril (apply to the front part of the nostril). The nostrils should be closed by pressing the sides of the nose together; this will spread the ointment through the nostrils.

Please return to your GP practice as soon as practicable following your first treatment for re-swabbing.

Date of MRSA Positive

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Wash	Wash	Wash	Wash	Wash	No wash or cream	No wash or cream
Use nose cream	Use own soap	Use own soap				

Tick or sign

Date of 2nd Screen

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Before Admission Date					
Use body wash and nose cream					

Method of application of body wash

- Ensure all skin surfaces are covered when using the body wash.
- Ensure that your hair and body are wet.
- Put lotion onto a damp disposable wet cloth.
- Apply lotion all over hair and body, paying special attention to your armpits groin and feet.
- Leave the lotion on your skin for one minute before rinsing.
- Rinse off thoroughly
- Dry with a clean, dry towel.
- Put on clean underclothes or nightwear every day.
- Ensure all bed linen and towels are changed daily and washed on the highest possible temperature.

Patient Information

Further advice

If you wish to discuss any aspects of your treatment for MRSA or have any further concerns please contact either the hospital:

Infection Prevention and Control Team on 024 7696 4791

or

Community Teams for Coventry on 024 7623 7006

or

Community Team for Warwickshire on 07818 045192

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 4791 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

Document History

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Department	Infection prevention and control
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