

Infection Prevention and Control

Multi-Resistant Acinetobacter Baumannii (MRAB)

This information is for patients, relatives and carers. It explains what MRAB is, how it affects us, how it spreads and what we can do to stop it spreading.

What is Acinetobacter?

Acinetobacter is a germ commonly found in the environment, including in drinking water, soil, various foods and sewage. About 1 in 4 people carry Acinetobacter on their skin or in their bowels without harm.

Acinetobacter baumannii (A baumannii) can be resistant to some antibiotics and is called multi-resistant Acinetobacter Baumannii (MRAB).

MRAB can cause infection or colonisation.

What is the difference between infection and colonisation?

MRAB can cause infection or colonisation.

Infection means the MRAB germ in, or on, the body is making you ill.

Colonisation means you carry the bacteria in, or on, your body but you are not sick. If you are colonised your hospital stay will not be increased, and you will not need any treatment. Both colonised and infected people can spread the germ to others.



How can you prevent MRAB spreading?

Acinetobacter can be spread by person-to-person contact, contact with contaminated surfaces, or exposure in the environment (by colonised medical equipment).

Acinetobacter can enter the body through open wounds, catheters, breathing tubes and cannulas.

Regular and thorough hand washing is one of the most successful ways to help stop the spread of MRAB.

People with MRAB should wash their hands regularly, especially after going to the toilet.

Healthcare workers treating you should clean their hands regularly as they care for you, especially when they enter and leave your room. This will protect you from other germs and remove the MRAB germ and stop it spreading. You should not hesitate to discuss the importance of cleaning hands with the staff caring for you.

Healthcare workers may also take more steps to help stop the spread of MRAB by:

- Moving you to a single room in the hospital.
- Wearing a gown, or apron, and gloves if they are providing direct care.
- Cleaning by domestic staff removes germs that live on hospital surfaces.

Treatment

If you have an infection, you may need antibiotics. It can be difficult to treat infections because MRAB is resistant to some antibiotics. For this reason, you will need to be monitored closely and may also need more testing to make sure the drugs you are prescribed will work for you.

How can you protect your family and friends from infection?

The staff will give your visitors advice about cleaning their hands when they enter and leave your room. If visitors are having close contact with you (such as helping with washing and dressing) we will ask them to wear an apron provided by the hospital. It is also important your visitors do not touch your wounds or bandages.

Exposure to someone with MRAB should not harm healthy people, including those who are pregnant, children and babies.

What happens when you get home?

When you get home, continue to clean your hands regularly, and ask other people in the house to do the same.

You do not need to change your normal household cleaning, for example:

- Towels, clothes, bed sheets and other items that might have MRAB germs on them can be washed in a normal washing machine at standard temperature.
- All eating utensils and dishes can be washed as you would normally.

When seeing new doctors or if you return to hospital, it is important to tell staff about any previous or current MRAB infections or if you have been found to be colonised with MRAB.

Once you are home, if you are worried about your MRAB result you can speak to your own GP, who will be aware of your hospital records.

Where can you get further information?

- Talk to your doctor or the nurses caring for you.
- The **Infection Prevention and Control team** can be contacted on 024 7696 4791 or extension 24791.

Patient Information

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.

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