

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus are bacteria that can live on our bodies, usually causing no harm. About 30% of the population carry *S. aureus* on their skin or in their nose without being aware of it. At certain times, e.g. following injury or surgery, it can cause infections.

These infections can be mild or more serious.

MRSA stands for Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. This *Staphylococcus* has become resistant to many commonly used antibiotics. There are a smaller number of antibiotics that can be used to treat MRSA.

Where is MRSA Found?

MRSA can survive in dust but it is most commonly found on people, generally in moist areas such as the nose, armpits and groin. It can also be found in wounds.

What Does MRSA Do?

MRSA does not always cause infection.

Many people are unaware that they carry MRSA, because it does them no harm and causes them no symptoms.

MRSA can cause harm if it gets an opportunity to enter the body, e.g. through a cut or wound.

How is MRSA Spread?

Preventing the spread of MRSA infection is very important.

It is often passed on by human contact, particularly on hands. When hands have been in contact with MRSA and are not washed thoroughly the MRSA can “hitch a ride” to the next person.

Carriers can be a source of infection for themselves (e.g., they can infect themselves if they have a wound).

Because of this people being admitted to hospital will have swabs taken. If these show MRSA carriage, treatment of the skin and nose may be given.

This will reduce carriage and the likelihood of passing MRSA on to other patients, or for the MRSA to cause infection in the carrier themselves. This can happen if the MRSA gets into the body through

wounds or during treatments that break the skin or involve devices (e.g. surgery, catheters)

If you see, or are asking for advice from any healthcare professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, dentist, podiatrist, physiotherapist) or are visiting hospital for treatment, you must tell them that you have, or have had MRSA in the past.

How is MRSA Diagnosed?

Specimens such as a nose swab, wound swab or urine sample will be taken by a healthcare professional and sent to the laboratory for testing.

How is it Treated?

Treatment may take the form, of an ointment, cream, powder and/or lotion. This will clear the MRSA from the nose, skin and wounds.

Antibiotics may be given if you have an infection.

Treatment for MRSA should not affect the treatment of any other medical conditions that you may have.

MRSA

Patient Information Leaflet



Jointly written by Local NHS Organisations

Further information can be found at www.hpa.org.uk & www.dh.gov.uk & www.healthcareA2Z.org

Following treatment another sample may be taken and tested in the laboratory to see if the MRSA has gone

What Can I Do to Help Get Rid of MRSA?

- To stop MRSA spreading, wash hands thoroughly and cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof plaster or dressing
- People who are in close contact should wash their hands often
- Use any treatment you have been given, and follow the instructions carefully.
- You may be asked to change clothing and bed linen daily.

Additional Information

You should continue your normal life.

MRSA colonisation should not stop your usual activities, including socialising, swimming and going to the gym. Anyone who has sores or open wounds, if they have MRSA or not, should avoid swimming.

Sores and wounds should be covered with a waterproof dressing during sports.

Friends and family are not normally at risk from MRSA. It does not usually cause problems in healthy people.

Children can attend nursery or school as normal. You do not have to inform the school or nursery.

Usually you can go to work. If you work in a healthcare setting, and have an MRSA infection, you should contact your GP or occupational health service for advice.

It is safe for pregnant women to have contact with someone who has MRSA. Breastfeeding is safe for the babies of mothers with MRSA.

If you do have MRSA, it is unlikely to harm your partner and you can have a normal relationship.

For further information Contact

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Phone-----
E-mail-----

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