



Infection Prevention and Control

***MRSA (Meticillin resistant  
staphylococcus aureus)***

**Information for patient and visitors**

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# What is MRSA? (Meticillin resistant staphylococcus aureus)?

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria that over 30% of the population carry on their skin or in their nose at any time without being aware of it.

Most strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* can be effectively treated with a variety of antibiotics.

MRSA stands for "Meticillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*" and is a *Staphylococcus aureus* which has become resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics, and because of this MRSA can cause infections that can be more difficult to treat.

People who do have MRSA on their skin and/or in their nose are unharmed by it. This is called being colonised.

When the organism gets into the body through wounds, injuries, etc. a person might become infected.

## Why is it a problem?

A person may get an infection if the bacteria has the opportunity to multiply in their body.

Patients in hospital are more vulnerable to acquiring MRSA infection if they have open wounds, urinary catheters, or intravenous lines.

MRSA is no more dangerous than ordinary *Staphylococcus aureus*, but it is resistant to the commonest antibiotics used to treat infection.

Therefore, if someone has an infection caused by MRSA, there are a limited number of antibiotics that can be used to treat it.

## How is it spread?

MRSA is spread mainly via contaminated hands. If people have MRSA on their hands, they can transfer it to people and objects that they touch.

Other people can then pick it up on their hands and pass it on to others. Therefore, hand hygiene at the right moment is essential.

This is why healthcare staff wear gloves and aprons when providing care.

This precaution is taken in order to prevent the spread of MRSA within the hospital.

## **How is the diagnosis made?**

MRSA is diagnosed in a laboratory from specimens.

## **Will I need single room?**

It may be necessary to care for you in a single room whilst you are in hospital. The people caring for you will explain what is involved.

There are no special requirements once you are back at home.

## **How will I be treated?**

If you are colonised with MRSA, you might be prescribed creams and body wash/shampoo. You might need to continue using treatments at home following a hospital stay.

# How can I help stop spread?

When you are in hospital, you can help reducing the risk of infection by taking precautions such as:

- ✔ Keeping your hands and body clean.
- ✔ Always washing your hands after using the toilet or commode (hand wipes are available for patients unable to get to the hand wash sinks).
- ✔ Always clean your hands immediately after coughing or sneezing into the hands, or when your hands are visibly dirty.
- ✔ Not touching your dressing, wound or urinary catheter.
- ✔ Making sure your bed area is regularly cleaned and report any unclean toilet or bathroom facilities to a member of staff.

## Remember it's OK to ask !

*If you are concerned about hygiene, don't be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse treating you if they have cleaned their hands.*

***Remember it's OK to ask!***

# What precautions should visitors take?

- ✔ MRSA is rarely a problem for healthy people. It is not normally necessary for visitors to wear gloves and aprons. However if visitors are having close contact with patients, for example, helping with washing and dressing - we suggest that they are worn.
- ✔ It is important that visitors clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub when they arrive on the ward and before leaving.
- ✔ They should keep cuts and grazes covered with a dressing/waterproof plaster. Please ask the nurses if you are unsure.
- ✔ It is not advisable to visit with young children so please check with the nurses before bringing children or babies to visit.

# Will it delay my discharge from hospital?

Usually there will be no delay if you are returning to your own home.

It should not stop you going into a nursing or residential home, where although you may have a single room, you will be able to mix freely with most other residents.

If you need to be transferred to another hospital, you may experience a slight delay as some specialist hospital units may want you to be in a single room.

This should not compromise your care in any way.



# What happens when I get home?

- ✔ Family life should continue as normal. MRSA will not affect your normal activities and is extremely unlikely to harm healthy people, including babies, children and pregnant women.
- ✔ It should not stop you shopping, socialising, visiting friends, etc. and living your life as normal.
- ✔ Normal domestic cleaning is adequate, surfaces and floors should be cleaned/ vacuumed regularly.
- ✔ Clothing, bedding etc. can be washed as normal in the family washing machine.
- ✔ Rubbish can go into the ordinary household waste.
- ✔ District nurses or community nurses may need to wear gloves and aprons when providing physical care for you, for example dressing wounds.
- ✔ If you need to be admitted to any hospital in future you should tell the staff that you have had MRSA in the past.

***Infection prevention and control is everyone's responsibility. Patients and visitors all have an important role to play in preventing the spread of healthcare associated infections.***

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet. We hope that you have found it useful. If you would like more information, please ask the nurse caring for you or the clinical lead.

If you require further advice or information, please contact the hospital's Infection Prevention and Control Team or a member of the clinical area (ward/outpatient area).

Further information can be found at:

NHS website- [MRSA](#)



# Accessibility

Patient information leaflets are available on our website:  
[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets)

# Get in touch

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# Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

Phone             0800 328 7971  
Email             [PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Become a member of our foundation trust: [www.ohftnhs.uk/membership](http://www.ohftnhs.uk/membership)

Support Oxford Health Charity, making a difference to patients, their families and staff who care for them: [www.oxfordhealth.charity](http://www.oxfordhealth.charity)