



MRSA **(Methicillin Resistant** **Staphylococcus Aureus)**

Inpatient information leaflet



This leaflet explains about your MRSA result

It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and the doctor or nurse caring for you, but it may act as a starting point for discussion.

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of bacteria (germ) called Methicillin Staphylococcus Aureus that has become resistant to a penicillin group of antibiotics.

MRSA can live harmlessly on your skin, in your nose or in wounds such as leg ulcers. When MRSA is detected from a swab taken, and the patient has no signs of infection, this is referred to as colonisation. Meaning that the bacteria is present, but not causing signs or symptoms of an infection.

I have been told I am MRSA positive, what does this mean?

If you have been told you are MRSA positive, this means that the MRSA bacteria has been found in one or more areas described above. This may be found by the nurse taking some swabs from you, or your medical records may show that you have been MRSA positive in the past.

MRSA can be passed on to other people in the same hospital or ward, despite you having no symptoms.

This means that if you are found to be MRSA positive, you may need to have some treatment to remove the MRSA and you may be asked to stay in your own room or restrict your movement around the ward to prevent MRSA spreading to others.

What is an MRSA infection?

When a person carrying MRSA goes into hospital and has a procedure that breaks the skin (e.g. an operation), or has a wound or catheter, the MRSA can get into the body and may cause an infection.

When MRSA causes an infection, this means the bacteria are causing the person to be ill. The bacteria can also cause more serious chest or blood infections. If a patient has an infection caused by MRSA then antibiotics are required.

How can MRSA be treated?

The usual treatment for MRSA colonisation is to have an antibacterial skin wash all over the body and hair. An antibiotic ointment is usually prescribed for the nose.

The aim of this treatment is to reduce the bacteria you have, to a harmless level. Your doctor or nurse will give you instructions for the treatment, and will give you assistance if necessary. This course of treatment usually lasts for five days.

How will I know if the MRSA has gone?

The nurse looking after you will take some more swabs or specimen, usually from your nose and an area of skin on your body.

If you have a wound this will be swabbed. If you have a catheter, a sample of urine may be taken. These will be tested in the laboratory and the results will be ready usually within two to three days.

Once the specimens show no MRSA, then the bacteria has been removed. It is often necessary to take more than one set of specimens, to be sure that the MRSA has been fully removed.

How can I make sure that I don't spread MRSA to other people?

The amount of isolation needed for each person may be different and your doctor or nurse will explain what will be necessary for you.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients when you are in hospital, is to use isolation precautions. This means that you may be nursed in your own room and asked to restrict your movement around the ward.

The staff on the ward will wear gloves and aprons and ensure they are cleaning their hands regularly, in order to prevent the MRSA being spread by them when they are caring for you.

Can MRSA harm my visitors?

MRSA does not harm healthy people; this includes pregnant women and children.

Visitors should keep cuts covered with a waterproof dressing and ensure they clean their hands before entering and leaving the ward.

Visitors should not need to wear gloves and aprons unless they are having direct personal contact.

Do I have to stay in hospital if I am MRSA positive?

No you do not need to stay in hospital just because you are MRSA positive. Once you are fit enough to be discharged, your treatment may be stopped.

There may be a need for some patients to carry on with their treatment at home, but if this is the case it will be discussed with you and the relevant healthcare worker will be informed.

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