

MRSA

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus

Patient information leaflet



Produced by East Coast Community Healthcare Infection,
Prevention and Control Team
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What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a type of bacteria that lives harmlessly on the skin or in the nose of some people but can cause infections, particularly in open wounds, such as leg ulcers. MRSA is resistant to some common antibiotics, which means treating it can be more difficult.

How did I get MRSA?

MRSA is usually spread through:

- Direct skin to skin contact
- Contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment

What does it mean if I have MRSA and how is it treated?

You may be colonised, which means the bacteria are present, but not causing harm. You may be offered a decolonisation/suppression treatment:

- Antibacterial body wash for 5-10 days depending on the swab result
- Nasal ointment to apply inside your nose
- You should wash your hair on days 2 and 4 with the body wash.
(if you have a resistant strain you may need a longer course of treatment)

Or

You may have an infection where MRSA is causing symptoms like redness, swelling or pus. You may be prescribed antibiotics based on your test results. If you have a wound, dressings will be used to help keep the wound clean and reduce infection risk.

We will take swabs from your wound (and sometimes nose or groin) to check for MRSA.

Can I still attend clinic?

Yes, but special measures will be taken to protect you and others: You may be seen at a different time or in a different room. Extra care will be taken with cleaning and equipment.

How do I minimise the spread to others?

MRSA is not usually a risk to healthy people. To reduce the risk to others, you can:

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water, and dry thoroughly especially before meals and after using the toilet
- Do not share towels, facecloths or dressings
- Keep wounds dry and covered with clean dressings
- Clean surfaces regularly, especially in the bathroom
- Wash clothes, towels and bed linen at 60° if possible
- Clean/vacuum floors/carpets regularly to help remove any skin scales shed.

Will I always have MRSA?

Not necessarily. Some people carry MRSA temporarily and decolonisation treatment can help remove it. Others may carry it long term without any problems. We will support you with regular reviews and wound care. Clean towels, bedding and clothing should be used during each treatment.

When to seek medical advice?

Contact your GP or clinic nurse if:

- Your wound becomes more painful, red, swollen or starts to smell
- You feel generally unwell (fever, chills)

For further advice either speak to the nurse looking after you, GP or contact: Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01502 445361

More Information:

NHS Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/mrsa UK

Health Security Agency (UKHSA):

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mrsa

Compliments, concerns or complaints

Tel: 01502 445447

Email: patientliaison@ecchcic.nhs.uk Or

write to:

PALS, East Coast Community Healthcare,
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road,
Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

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