

MRSA Screening and Decolonisation Therapy

General information for
patients and carers



Infection Prevention
and Control

South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust takes MRSA and healthcare associated infections extremely seriously. We are committed to reducing infections in our hospitals and providing high quality health care service.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. It means the bacterium (germ) *Staphylococcus aureus* has become resistant to the antibiotic meticillin and some, but not all, of the most commonly used antibiotics.

Where does MRSA live?

MRSA can be found anywhere on the human body such as on the skin, in the nose and sometimes in wounds. It can live for short periods in dust.

What problems can MRSA cause?

Most patients identified as having MRSA carry the bacterium harmlessly on their body. When this happens the patient is said to be colonised with MRSA. In these cases, MRSA can cause problems such as boils, abscesses and wound infections. On rare occasions, MRSA can cause more serious infections such as blood poisoning.

How common is it?

The trust recognises MRSA as a serious issue. Because of this, prevention and control of hospital-acquired infections remains an essential part of quality patient care.

Why do we need to screen for MRSA?

The Department of Health have made it compulsory for all acute trusts in England to screen all planned operations, all MRSA previously positive patients and all emergency admissions to help combat healthcare associated infections in hospitals. Most people with MRSA do not show any symptoms. We need to know if someone is carrying MRSA on their skin so that treatment can be given to reduce the risk of complications to them and other patients whilst they are recovering from their illness.

How will I know if I have MRSA?

Patients with MRSA do not look or feel different from other patients. MRSA can only be identified from specimens sent to the hospital laboratories. Patients may have been carrying MRSA on their skin or in a wound before coming into hospital or may have acquired it in hospital. MRSA is almost always spread by physical contact and not usually through the air.

What tests are done?

Swabs will be taken in line with Department of Health policy.

These include:

- Most planned admissions (this may be in Pre-Assessment Clinic, Outpatient Department or at a GP surgery).
- Patients known to have had MRSA in the past and admitted into hospital.
- Patients transferred from another hospital.
- Patients admitted as an emergency.

We will take a swab from inside your nostrils, your groin and any open wounds. The test is painless and only takes a minute. The swabs are then sent to the laboratory for testing. It takes a couple of days to get the results back.

Is MRSA treatable?

Yes, despite popular belief, most MRSA colonisations and infections are successfully treated. Some people with MRSA may not need antibiotics if the bacterium is not causing any harm. However if antibiotics are needed then it will be in either tablet form or given through a drip in the arm.

Most patients with MRSA in hospital will receive treatment to try to remove MRSA from the skin. This treatment will consist of nasal cream and anti-bacterial hair and body wash. This is called decolonisation treatment.

What happens next?

Following pre-admission, if your results are negative then your admission can continue and you can have your procedure as planned.

If the results are positive you will be informed. If you are awaiting surgery you will be given treatment to reduce the number of bacteria on your skin. This consists of a five days course of special body wash to clean your skin and hair and cream for inside your nostrils. This is called 'decolonisation treatment'. This course of treatment will be supplied to you by the Trust (see page 6 for how to apply the treatment).

Generally your planned procedure is likely to go ahead regardless of whether you are MRSA positive or not, however for some procedures your doctor may decided that it is better that you are clear of MRSA before they carry out your procedure. In some circumstances you will be given special antibiotics prior to your operation. You will also receive these antibiotics if you are to undergo surgery and you have had MRSA in the past.

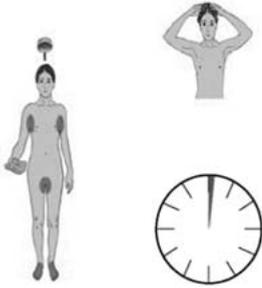
Other reasons for decolonisation therapy

Certain wards and departments also utilise decolonisation therapy even before MRSA screening may have taken place. This is because those areas are thought to carry a higher risk of having patients that are admitted with MRSA.

Intensive care settings where the patients are more susceptible to developing infections also routinely decolonise patients admitted.

The Cardiothoracic division also utilise decolonisation prior to some surgical procedures.

How should I apply Octenisan bodywash?

<p>1.</p>  <p>Ensure that your hair and body are wet</p>	<p>2.</p>  <p>Use 30ml of solution</p> <p>Put the lotion onto a damp washcloth</p>	<p>3.</p>  <p>Apply all over hair and body paying special attention to the darker shaded areas</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Leave the lotion on your skin for three minutes before rinsing</p>  <p>Rinse off thoroughly</p>	<p>5.</p>  <p>Dry with clean, dry towel</p>	<p>6.</p>  <p>Put on clean underclothes/nightwear every day</p>

Picture acknowledgment: University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust

Please complete this short questionnaire and give to the nurse when you come for your procedure.

Follow up MRSA screening questions:

If your MRSA screen was negative we will need to establish if you have received any further treatment or experienced any changes since your last appointment. Please answer the following questions.

1. Have you been admitted into hospital, if so where?
2. Have you attended another outpatient department, if so which department?
3. If yes, what did you have done?
4. Have you been admitted to a care home?
5. Have you received any treatment which required an invasive device such as cannula, urinary catheter, endoscopy?
6. Do you live with or provide care for anyone with MRSA?
7. Have you received care from a community nurse?
8. Do you have any wounds or damaged skin?
9. Are you a healthcare worker?
10. Please advise staff if you have ever been diagnosed with MRSA

Comments, compliments, concerns or complaints

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is concerned about the quality of care you receive and strives to maintain high standards of health care.

However we do appreciate that there may be an occasion where you, or your family, feel dissatisfied with the standard of service you receive. Please do not hesitate to tell us about your concerns as this helps us to learn from your experience and to improve services for future patients.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This service aims to advise and support patients, families and carers and help sort out problems quickly on your behalf.

This service is available at The James Cook University Hospital and the Friarage Hospital Northallerton, please ask a member of staff for further information.

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