

### Will I have to stay longer in hospital because I have MRSA?

Most patients who are colonised with MRSA do not usually have to stay longer in hospital. If you have an infection you may have to stay in hospital longer

### Will I need treatment for MRSA when I go home?

If you are colonised with MRSA it is unlikely that you will need to continue with your treatment when you go home, however, if you are discharged and prescribed antibiotics it is important that you complete the course. Further information can be obtained from your local Infection Control Team.

### What will happen if I am admitted to hospital again?

If you are re-admitted to hospital it is important that you inform staff if you have had MRSA in the past.

It is also important to inform a member of staff that you have had MRSA, if you visit an outpatient department, your GP's surgery, practice nurse or treatment room.

### Where can I get more information about MRSA ?

- Health Protection Agency [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)
- The Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, have information about MRSA for patients on their web-site, [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/aresist/mrsafaq.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/aresist/mrsafaq.htm)

# MRSA

Information for inpatients  
in the Primary Care Setting



What is MRSA and how does it affect patients and the people around them – family and friends, nurses, doctors and other patients.

If you have any questions about MRSA ask a member of staff

## What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to as "Staph. aureus," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Occasionally, Staph. aureus can cause an infection; Staph. aureus bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the world. Most of these infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and most can be treated without antibiotics. However, Staph. aureus bacteria can also cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections and pneumonia). In the past, most serious Staph. aureus bacteria infections were treated with a certain type of antibiotic related to penicillin. Over the past 50 years, treatment of these infections has become more difficult because Staph. aureus bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics, including the commonly used penicillin-related antibiotics. These resistant bacteria are called methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.

## HOW CAN IT AFFECT ME?

Like almost all germs, MRSA can sometimes cause infection. Most of the time it lives like many other germs on the skin or in the nose and causes no harm. If there are no signs or symptoms to indicate that it is present, this is called colonisation.

For a minority of patients MRSA causes an infection, and then signs and symptoms are present. These may vary from person to person. The common signs of infection are listed below (NB these may not be caused by MRSA).

The most common symptoms for wound infections are redness, heat, swelling and pain. The wound may also leak.

For a chest infection the signs are a cough with spit and shortness of breath.

For a urinary tract infection the symptoms are having to pass urine often and it may cause discomfort. Your urine may also be cloudy and foul smelling.

## How can you tell if someone has MRSA?

Patients who have MRSA do not look or feel different from other patients.

## How did I get MRSA?

You may have acquired MRSA before you came into hospital or you may have acquired it in hospital.

## How does MRSA change the way that you look after me and what will happen now?

Your local Infection Control Team will carry out a risk assessment and what happens next will depend on the results. In most cases no additional treatment is required.

Your nurse may take some swabs (from the nose, skin and any wounds that you might have). Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics or in some cases an ointment for your nose and a lotion that is used when you have a bath or shower. You may be moved to a single room in order to prevent MRSA spreading to other patients in the ward. Or no additional precautions may be required.

## Can I have visitors, or can MRSA harm my family and friends?

MRSA does not harm healthy people, including pregnant women, children and babies. MRSA can affect people who have certain long-term health problems, e.g. renal failure, diabetes. Please ask the nursing staff first if someone who has a long-term health problem wants to visit you. All your visitors will be asked to clean their hands (either with soap and water or alcohol gel) before and after they visit you as a general precaution.