

# MRSA Positive

An information guide



# MRSA Positive

## What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ often found on the skin and up the nose of normal healthy people.

Most strains of this germ are sensitive to many antibiotics, and infections can easily be treated. However, some strains of this germ are resistant to an antibiotic called Meticillin and are referred to as Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).

## Will it make me ill?

You may have swabs taken from your nose and groin area, before, on or during admission to hospital. This will identify colonisation with MRSA.

Most patients who we find are positive for MRSA are colonised with the germ rather than infected by it. Colonisation means that the germ is found on the skin, in the nose or groin, but without causing any illness. MRSA can cause harm when it gets an opportunity to enter the body. It can cause local infections, such as wound infections, chest infections or blood stream infections.

A small number of patients may become infected, particularly if they have other risk factors, such as those who have had an operation or are on intensive care units, as their body defences cannot fight these germs effectively.

## **Are other people at risk?**

MRSA does not usually affect healthy people. It does not harm elderly people, pregnant women, children and babies. It can affect people who have serious health problems, and people who have chronic skin conditions or open wounds. Visitors can reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to other people if they take some precautions:

- Do not sit or lie on hospital beds
- Wash their hands or use alcohol hand rub on entering the wards and at the end of their visit.

Your friends and family need not be discouraged from normal contact and you should ask advice if:

- Someone who has a long-term health problem and wants to visit you
- If you want to visit another patient in hospital.

## **How is the spread of MRSA prevented within the hospital?**

Hand washing by all hospital staff before and after each patient contact is the single most important factor in preventing the spread of this germ. If you have MRSA you may need to be isolated in a single room, staff will wear disposable plastic aprons and use alcohol hand rub (AHR) or soap and water while looking after you.

## **Effective hand hygiene**

Hand washing should always occur before meals and after using the toilet. This will not only protect you, but will prevent cross infection to others.

Please use the hand wipes that will be provided for you if you are not able to use the hand wash basin.

## Hand washing

- Wet hands before applying soap. Thoroughly lather all hand surfaces, and beneath rings, and clean for at least thirty seconds
- Liquid soap is preferable to bar soap, which can become a source of infection
- Wash hands under running water and rinse well before drying
- Pat dry hands thoroughly with disposable towels.

## Using disinfectant hand rubs

If your hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with faeces or blood, then you should always use soap and water.

Alcohol hand rub is available to staff, patients and visitors throughout the Trust. You should use it before eating and **after using the toilet**. All visitors should use soap and water or the rub on entering or leaving the ward area. Alcohol hand rub can be used on its own. You do not need to use it with soap and water. If your hands are contaminated with faeces or blood, then you should use soap and water. Alcohol hand rub reduces the amount of bacteria found on the hands. The same hand washing technique is used when using alcohol hand rub as when using soap and water. One application of alcohol hand rub is usually enough. **Please note that alcohol hand rub effects artificial and vanished nails.**

## What will happen when I go home?

You may go home as soon as your general medical condition allows. Your discharge should not normally be delayed because of MRSA. If however you have an MRSA infection you may have to stay in hospital until you have completed the course of antibiotics and the infection shows signs of clearing up. If you have started treatment whilst in hospital and are discharged home please finish the course. All social activities may be resumed as soon as you feel ready.

## How can I obtain further information?

Please ask the ward staff who will contact the Infection Control Team if necessary.

## Using nasal cream and body wash to clear MRSA

You may be asked to follow a **5-day antiseptic programme** that tackles the MRSA living on your skin, which will make it harder for the bug to cause infection or spread to others.

### The treatment involves:

- A body wash/shampoo containing an antiseptic
- An ointment for putting inside your nostrils
- A mouthwash to rinse around the mouth and to gargle with.

Whilst in hospital your bed linen should be changed daily. If you are on treatment at home change your bed linen and towel at the end of the 5-day treatment.

### Using your body wash

- The body wash should be used for all washing and bathing **instead** of your usual soap/shower gel
- Follow your doctor's directions about how and when to use the body wash
- If possible take a shower every day (or a bath/assisted wash if unable to shower)
- Always use disposable cloths, which are provided whilst you are in hospital, or a clean face cloth when at home
- If your skin becomes itchy or sore, please stop using the body wash immediately and inform your nurse or doctor.

## How do I apply the body wash?

- Wet your skin first
- Apply about 30mls directly onto your skin **UNDILUTED**, using the cloth
- **DO NOT** dilute into bath water
- The body wash can also be used as a shampoo
- Wash all areas of body, paying particular attention to your underarms, hair and between your legs and leave on skin for 1 minute
- Rinse from head to toe
- Dry skin using a clean towel
- Avoid contact with the eyes – if soap does contact the eyes, rinse with plenty of cold water.

## Using your nasal ointment

Some nasal ointments are unsuitable for people with nut allergies – please discuss with your doctor if you are concerned.

Nasal ointment should be applied just inside the nostrils. Follow your doctor's directions about how and when to use the ointment.

## How should I apply nasal ointment?

- Wash hands
- Unscrew the cap and squeeze a small amount of ointment, about the size of a match head, on to your little finger
- Apply ointment to the **front part of the inside area of one nostril**
- Repeat for the other nostril
- Close your nostrils by pressing the sides of the nose together for a moment. This will spread the ointment inside each nostril.
- Wash your hands and replace the cap on the tube.

### **How do I apply nasal ointment to another person?**

A clean tissue may be used (with care), when applying nasal ointment to another person. Care should be taken not to insert the tissue too far.

### **How long should I use the ointment?**

Your doctor or nurse should inform you how long to use the ointment.

### **Using your mouthwash**

A capful of antiseptic mouthwash should be rinsed round the mouth and spat out. Follow your doctor's directions about how and when to use the mouthwash.

Do not swallow the mouthwash.

Some mouthwashes cause discoloration of the teeth, therefore do not use for longer than the 5 days, unless directed to do so by your doctor.

**If you have any questions or need help with the nasal cream, body wash or mouthwash, please ask your nurse or doctor.**

Your information may be shared with the Community Infection Prevention Team, if you have any concerns regarding this please ask your nurse or doctor to contact a member of the Infection Prevention Team for advice.

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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