

Reducing the risk of MRSA infection

Infection Prevention

Information for Patients & Carers

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What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a very common germ (bacteria) that around 30% of the population carry on their skin, or in the lining of their nose and throat, without knowing. Usually this bacteria is harmless. Sometimes it can cause skin infections such as boils or abscesses and can infect wounds. These infections are normally mild and are easily treated.

Certain strains of the Staphylococcus aureus bacteria have become resistant to some (not all) commonly used antibiotics (e.g. penicillin), so they no longer work for treating an infection. These strains are called **MRSA** which stands for methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus. MRSA can be difficult to treat if it does cause an infection.

How will I know if I have MRSA?

MRSA can only be detected through tests in a laboratory. If you are being admitted to a high risk ward or if you are previously known to have had MRSA, you will be screened when you are admitted to the hospital or before your planned admission (e.g. at a pre-assessment clinic).

A member of staff will use a cotton bud to collect a sample from inside your nose, near your bottom (perineum), from any medical devices (such as a catheter used to collect pee), and from any wounds or breaks in your skin.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What happens if I am found positive for MRSA?

You will be prescribed a nasal antibiotic cream which you or a nurse will apply to the inside of both of your nostrils, 3 or 4 times a day depending on which type of nasal cream you have been given. The nurse will make sure you know how to apply this.

Will it delay my hospital admission or discharge?

If you have MRSA, it is important that you let the hospital know before or when you are admitted. This will help us to care and manage you safely. This will not necessarily delay or prevent your admission.

If you are in hospital and are medically fit, having MRSA will not delay your discharge, either to your own home or to a care home.

How can I reduce the risk of MRSA infection?

To reduce the risk of MRSA infection, all adults (and some children's wards) must use the antibacterial liquid soap provided, while they are staying in hospital. You will be given this antibacterial soap for personal use when you are admitted to hospital, and it may also be available in the ward shower cubicles. This should be used for all of your stay.

For the antibacterial soap to work you must:

- use it every day.
- wet the skin and apply directly onto your skin using a clean wet cloth or hands.
- wash from head to toe, avoiding your eyes.
- wash around your nostrils.
- pay particular attention to folds of the skin e.g. under your arms and between your legs.
- wash your hair using the liquid soap twice weekly.
- leave the soap on your skin/ hair for at least 30 seconds before rinsing off from head to toe.
- if you wish to use your own shampoo, conditioner or shower gel, use it after rinsing off the antibacterial liquid soap.

How can you prevent the spread of MRSA?

MRSA can be spread by hands so hand hygiene (either washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol hand sanitiser) is the most effective way to stop it spreading.

It is particularly important for carers and healthcare workers to wash and dry their hands thoroughly, between caring for people. Healthcare workers may use an alcohol hand rub/ sanitiser (on visibly clean hands) to help make sure their hands are clean. Hand sanitiser only works on clean hands, so should not be used on dirty hands.

Always wash your hands with soap and water:

- when they look dirty.
- before preparing/ eating food.
- after using the toilet.
- after coughing or sneezing into your hands or a tissue/ hanky.
- after handling soiled linen/ bedding/ nappies.

Following these instructions will help stop harmful bacteria settling on your skin which could cause an infection.

Am I more at risk if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

If you are pregnant, there are no additional risks from MRSA if you are fit and healthy.

Breastfeeding is safe for you and your baby. Follow the usual advice for breastfeeding and if you experience any symptoms contact your GP, midwife or health visitor for further advice.

What advice should visitors/ carers follow?

Healthy people, including babies, children and pregnant women, are not usually at risk of MRSA infections. To prevent the spread of MRSA, friends and family should wash their hands thoroughly at regular intervals and make sure all cuts or grazes on their hands are covered with waterproof dressings.

Visitors/ carers do not need to wear gloves and aprons if they are just talking to you, but hands **must** be cleaned on entering and leaving the ward. We recommend they are warned when helping with personal/ hygiene needs such as washing. Visitors/ carers must clean their hands with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub after assisting with personal care, and after removing gloves.

What advice should I follow when I go home?

MRSA is not usually a problem for healthy people. You do not need to take any action or change your social activities, other than to make sure you have good hand hygiene.

Your laundry can be washed normally with the rest of your household wash unless soiled with body fluids; in which case it is best to wash separately using the warmest temperature recommended on the labels.

Nursing staff will give you further information before you go home if needed, and your GP will be informed of any relevant results.

What if I am discharged before my screening test results are available?

If your test results show you are carrying MRSA we will write to tell you. If you live in a care home, we will let the manager know of the result. We will also tell your GP if your result is positive. Your GP will discuss and arrange any treatment with you if needed.

Preventing the spread of infection at Leicester's Hospitals

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections across our hospitals we have a dedicated Infection Prevention Team (0116 258 5448) and policies which are evidence based and regularly reviewed. We closely monitor infection rates across our hospitals and any risks and trends are reported to our Infection Prevention Assurance Committee, our Board of Directors and Public Health England.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk