

Preventing the spread of multi-drug resistant (MDR) organisms

Infection Prevention

Information for Patients

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What are multi-drug resistant (MDR) organisms?

Multi-drug resistant (MDR) organisms are usually bacteria (germs) that have become resistant to certain commonly used antibiotics so that they no longer work. MDRs may also include viruses, parasites and other micro organisms, but bacteria are more common. An infection with these bacteria can still be treated but with antibiotics which are less commonly used.

There are many different types of MDR bacteria that can easily be found in our environment, including water and soil. They are very low risk to healthy people. Many people live with MDR organisms on their skin or in their bowel throughout their lives without it causing any problems or symptoms.

MDR bacteria are often referred to by a series of letters beginning with the name or type of antibiotic the germ is resistant to and ending with the name of the bacteria. Some types of germs are able to produce a substance to inactivate certain kinds of antibiotics. It can be confusing because not everyone calls the bacteria the same thing.

Examples of multi-drug resistant bacteria include:

- methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)
- vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE) - the same type of germ is also referred to as glycopeptide-resistant *Enterococcus* (GRE)
- extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing bacteria

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What infection can MDR organisms cause?

MDR germs cause similar infections to many other bacteria, such as wound, chest, blood stream and urinary tract infections. If you have an MDR infection you will be given an antibiotic which is less commonly used.

How did I pick up an MDR organism?

It is often not possible to determine exactly how or where someone came into contact with a particular germ. We know that people receiving lots of different antibiotics are more likely to develop resistant strains of bacteria, especially if the person does not finish a course of antibiotics.

MDR bacteria can be picked up through:

- person to person contact, including on hands.
- sharing personal items with an infected person.
- contact with contaminated environmental surfaces.
- contact with contaminated wounds, medical devices or equipment.

Who is at risk of MDR infection?

You are more likely to be infected with MDR organisms if you are already ill and have been admitted to hospital. Other risk factors are if you have:

- diarrhoea
- a heavily leaking wound
- medical devices that go into your body such as a catheter or drip.
- incontinence
- breaks in your skin

These all give the germs a place to live and reproduce. They also increase the risk of cross infection where the germs pass from person to person.

What happens if I'm carrying MDR organisms or have an infection?

If you have a positive MDR result and any of the risk factors above, you will usually be cared for in a room on your own (isolation) in the hospital. Hospital staff will wear aprons and gloves to care for you. This is to help stop the spread of MDR organisms to other patients.

If you have a positive MDR result, but don't have any risk factors, you may not need to be cared for in a single room.

Will I have to stay in hospital longer?

Unless you develop an infection you won't need to stay in hospital any longer. However, some of the antibiotics used to treat infections caused by MDR bacteria can be only given by injection, so you might need to stay in hospital whilst the infection is treated.

How can I prevent the spread of MDR organisms?

- Wash your hands with soap and water after:
 - using the toilet.
 - before eating.
 - when your hands appear dirty.
 - coughing/ sneezing into your hands/ tissue/ hanky.
- Use the hand sanitiser available at the end of your bed and on the walls around the hospital (this only works if your hands are visibly clean).
- Avoid touching medical devices (if you have any), such as a urinary catheter tube or intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it is inserted into your body or skin.
- Any personal laundry should be sent home and washed as soon as possible.
- All staff should always wash their hands and clean any equipment they use.

Is there a risk to my family/ visitors?

MDR organisms are not usually a problem for healthy people.

It is important to prevent the spread of MDR bacteria as infections caused by them can be more difficult to treat, as there are fewer antibiotics that work against them.

We ask that all visitors follow our normal visiting guidelines available on all wards, which includes limiting the number of visitors around the bed. We ask that visitors do not sit on a patient's bed. If children are allowed to visit (speak to the nurse in charge), they should not be allowed to crawl or play on the floor. All visitors should clean their hands before and after visiting anyone in hospital. These measures help to protect patients and prevent the spread of bacteria to others.

What advice should I follow at home?

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, then it is best to wash separately using the warmest temperature recommended on the label. Nursing staff will give you any further information before you go home.

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

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