

# Having a screening test for germs/ viruses

## Infection Prevention

Information for Patients & Carers

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### Why are patients screened for germs?

Patient safety is very important to us at Leicester's hospitals. We use a screening test when people come to hospital. This is a way of finding out if people have certain germs (bacteria and viruses). This test helps us to stop the spread of these germs. It also helps us give the right treatment if needed.

Germs are almost everywhere. They are in the air and on hard surfaces. They are on our bodies and skin and in our gut. Most of the time they do not make us sick, without ever making us ill. If these germs get into places that they should not be, like a wound, urinary tract, phlegm (sputum), they can cause infections.

### What to expect:

We may screen you before your planned treatment at the pre-operative assessment clinic. Or your GP may screen you. If you come to the hospital as an emergency, we may screen you when you are on the ward. We may look after you in a single room (isolation) or a bay when screening you.

Whilst in hospital we may ask to screen you for different germs. How many screenings we do depend on:

- where you are being admitted to in the hospital.
- if you are having an elective surgery.
- if you have been moved from another hospital.
- If you have had a known germ like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) or multi-drug resistant (MDR) germs before.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

- if you have had a stay in any hospital within the last 12 months.
- if you have had a stay in a hospital abroad within the last 12 months.

## How is a swab taken?

A swab has a cotton bud on it which is good at soaking up things. We rub this swab on and around the area that is being tested. This is painless. It takes a few seconds to do.

## Which germs/ viruses will I be screened for?

You may be screened for:

| Germ / Virus   | Where is the swab taken?  | Where will I be screened?   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Influenza /COVID/<br/>Respiratory viruses</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nose</li> <li>• Throat</li> </ul>  | Anywhere in the hospital if you have symptoms like a coughing, runny nose or fever.   |
| <b>MRSA</b><br>(methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nose</li> <li>• Skin between your genitals and back passage (perineum).</li> <li>• Any wounds/ skin lesions.</li> <li>• Mucus or phlegm (sputum) if you have it when you cough.</li> <li>• Urine (if you have a catheter inserted).</li> <li>• Any devices that go into your body</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgical pre-assessment clinics.</li> <li>• All high risk inpatient areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adult/ Children’s critical care areas</li> <li>– Adult/ Children’s cardiology and cardiac surgery</li> <li>– Adult/ Children’s cancer patients before starting chemotherapy</li> <li>– All adult surgical wards</li> <li>– Children’s respiratory ward</li> <li>– Trauma orthopaedics</li> <li>– Gastroenterology</li> <li>– Gynaecology</li> <li>– Kidney and transplant</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

| Germ / Virus   | Where is the swab taken?   | Where will I be screened?   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>MSSA</b><br/>(methicillin-sensitive Staphylococcus aureus)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nose</li> <li>• Skin between your genitals and back passage (perineum).</li> <li>• Any wounds/ skin lesions.</li> <li>• Mucus or phlegm (sputum) if you have it when you cough.</li> <li>• Urine (if you have a catheter inserted).</li> <li>• Any devices that go into your body.</li> </ul> | <p>We will screen you if you are a kidney dialysis patient or a patients that has a plastic tube (cannula) going into a major vein (central line).</p>                        |
| <p><b>MDR</b><br/>(multi-drug resistant organisms)</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back passage (rectum).</li> <li>• Any wounds/ skin lesions.</li> <li>• Mucus or phlegm (sputum) if you have it when you cough.</li> <li>• Urine (if you have a catheter inserted).</li> <li>• Any devices that go into your body.</li> </ul>  | <p>We will screen you on admission in all areas if you have tested positive for known MDR germs before. We will screen you weekly depending on risk factors.</p>              |
| <p><b>CRO</b><br/>(carbapenem-resistant organisms)</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back passage (rectum).</li> </ul>   | <p>We will screen you anywhere is the hospital if you have been in any hospital or a hospital abroad, within the last 12 months.</p> <p>Or as part of enhanced screening.</p> |

## What happens next?

It can take 2 to 3 days to get results back from your swab. Whilst we wait for test results we may care for you in a single room. This is to make sure we stop any possible infections spreading to other patients.

**A positive result does not mean you have an infection.** We will tell you what germ we have found. We will tell you what steps we will need to take next. If we collected your swab as an outpatient, we will send you a letter from the Infection Prevention Team. It will tell you about your positive results. We will also send you an information leaflet about what to do.



Most people do not get sick from these germs. It is still good to know that you have them. This also helps the doctors choose the right medicine for you if you need it. It will also stop the spread of germs to other people.

**If your results come back negative**, this means that you are not carrying the germ that you were screened for. You will not need any treatment or extra care. If you are in a single room, we may move you back to the main ward area.

You may need to be screened again if you have a longer stay in hospital.

## Preventing the spread of infection at Leicester's Hospitals

To reduce the risk of healthcare related infections across our hospitals we have a dedicated Infection Prevention Team (**0116 258 5448**). We have 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 [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)