

nose. While you are in hospital you may be moved into a single room or nursed with other patients with MRSA in order to prevent MRSA spreading to other patients in the ward.

At home you will be required to change and launder all your clothes, towels, sheets and pillowcases every day for 5 days.

Side effects of MRSA decontamination treatment

The treatment has few side effects and these are mild. If you develop a rash, stop the treatment and ask your clinic nurse or doctor for advice.

If you are worried about MRSA you can talk to your GP or practice nurse or visit the NHS choices website at www.nhs.uk where you can find further information about MRSA.

Please remember that hand washing with soap and water is a key method to prevent the spread of any infection. There is a hand wash sink in all single rooms, bays and at the entrances to all wards – **please use it before entering the ward and before you leave.**

For further advice on any of the issues discussed within this leaflet please ask any member of the nursing or medical staff.

Being open

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infection a number of things have been implemented across the Trust:

- A dedicated team responsible for helping staff maintain a high standard of care in Infection Prevention and Control
- A comprehensive Infection Prevention and Control policy which is evidence based and regularly reviewed
- All staff are required to attend a yearly education and training update
- A wide range of information leaflets have been produced for patients, carers and the public
- Infection rates are monitored across the Trust, any risks or trends identified are reported monthly to the Infection Prevention and Control Committee, the Board of Directors and Public Health England

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact a member of the Infection Prevention and Control team on **0121 371 3785** (external) or **13785** (internal).

Infection Prevention and Control
University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 0121 371 3785 (Internal 13785)
Heartlands, Good Hope and Solihull:
0121 424 1137



Building healthier lives

UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

Who is this leaflet for?

Patients coming for treatment at University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB).

What this leaflet tells you

This leaflet tells you what the Trust is doing to stop you from acquiring MRSA when you come into the hospital. UHB is committed to reducing infections in our hospital and providing our patients with the best in care. One important part of our strategy to reduce the risk of MRSA infection is our MRSA screening programme.

What is MRSA?

Many people have heard of meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) from the TV and newspapers.

Staphylococcus aureus is a common type of bacterium (bug) that can live harmlessly in our noses or on our skin but sometimes it can cause infections such as boils and wound infections.

Meticillin is a type of penicillin. MRSA is not killed by commonly used antibiotics. MRSA tends to be more of a problem in hospital, because people there are more likely to get infections as they are already unwell.

MRSA colonisation (carriage)

Staphylococcus aureus is a common bacterium: around 30% of people

carry this germ in their nose or on their skin (this is often referred to as being 'colonised' with the germ). However, only a small number of patients coming to hospital for surgery have MRSA. Most people who have MRSA carry it without any symptoms. This is termed colonisation or carriage.

However, if you come into hospital for an operation or some other procedures there may be an opportunity for MRSA to enter your body/bloodstream and cause actual infection. To reduce the likelihood of this happening and to ensure that you receive the right antibiotics if you develop an infection you will be screened for MRSA.

Patients who are colonised with MRSA will be given a skin wash to help remove MRSA from the skin. You will also be given a cream to put up your nose.

Who needs to be screened for MRSA?

Most patients admitted to our hospitals, will be screened for MRSA. The only exceptions are patients who are going to have an endoscopy, day case procedures or eye surgery. Some patients who regularly attend (for example those on kidney dialysis) will be screened at regular intervals rather than on every admission. At UHB we also re-screen patients who have been in hospital for more than 4 weeks.

How will I be screened for MRSA?

We can identify if you are carrying MRSA by taking a swab from the inside of your nose, your groin and throat. We may also take a swab from any ulcers or wounds you may have. This is a painless procedure. You may be screened on admission or at a pre-admission clinic.

How long do the results take?

It usually takes between 3–5 working days for the swab results to be available. This is because the MRSA has to 'grow' in the lab.

What if I have MRSA?

If you are found to be carrying MRSA do not worry! You are unlikely to suffer any harm or to infect anyone else. It is only an issue to family members if they themselves are expecting to have an operation in the near future. If you are worried about MRSA please talk to the clinic nurse, your GP or practice nurse. If you are colonised with MRSA you will usually be moved to a single side room on the ward, to reduce the likelihood of transmission.

Treatment for MRSA

If you are colonised with MRSA, you will be treated with the antiseptic body wash and antibiotic cream for your