



Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) patient screening (page 1 of 2)

This information leaflet has been designed for patients who are having MRSA screening before admission to the hospital. MRSA screening is the testing of samples on or before admission. If patients are found to have MRSA they need to be actively decolonised before they have planned surgery.

Why do I need to be screened?

Many people carry *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S.aureus*) harmlessly on their skin or up their nose. Some of these bacteria may be more antibiotic resistant and are called MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). People carrying MRSA are said to be colonised with it, and this does not normally require any treatment. Usually MRSA lives harmlessly on the skin, but it can cause infection if the bacteria enters the body, such as through an open wound.

If we can find out whether you are colonised with MRSA before you are admitted to hospital, we can plan your care more effectively and treat the MRSA before you are admitted.

What will the screen involve?

The staff in the pre-operative assessment clinic or outpatients department will take a swab from your nose (the most common site for MRSA colonisation) and swabs from any wounds that you may have. In some cases a groin swab will also be taken. If you have a urinary catheter a specimen of urine will be taken. Results usually take 2 or 3 days to process and you will be contacted if your results are positive. If the results are negative you will not be contacted.

If I have MRSA will this stop me having my operation?

Most people found to be positive are carrying MRSA harmlessly. Although it is a more resistant organism than the more common *S. aureus*, MRSA can still be treated successfully. Surgery will go ahead as planned in most cases, but many patients will need to use nasal ointment and body wash for 5 days before they come into hospital.

If I am positive, what treatment will I need?

You will be given an antiseptic soap to wash your skin and hair, and a cream which is applied to the inside of your nostrils. You will be given the

If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customer-care@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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chance to collect your treatment from the hospital or to receive a prescription through the post to take to your local pharmacist. Prescription charges will apply unless you are normally exempt. The treatment for MRSA will be for 5 days for most patients.

What will happen when I come into hospital?

When you come into hospital you might have to be isolated in a side room or you might be nursed in a bay with other patients who have tested positive for MRSA and have been treated.

Reducing your risk of re-colonisation or infection

You need to understand what you can do to reduce the risk of re-colonisation or potential infection with MRSA:

- Washing your hands carefully and thoroughly is the single most effective way of preventing infection. This is especially important if you visit any care facility, such as a nursing home or hospital, where there could be vulnerable patients or patients that might have infection.
- Washing your hands with soap and water and using the alcohol hand rub gel, whilst you are an inpatient, will also reduce the risk of infection. Your family and friends should also be encouraged to follow these practices when they visit.

For further information about MRSA please contact:

- Your general practitioner (GP)
- NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or www.nhs.uk
- <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/mrsa.htm>
- Public Health England (PHE) at visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/mrsa-information-for-patients