

What is MRSA?

Advice for patients and visitors

MRSA is a type of bacteria that's resistant to some antibiotics, which can make treating infections more difficult. Follow our guidance here on how to reduce your risk of catching and spreading MRSA.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus.

It's a type of bacteria that's resistant to different types of antibiotics which are used to treat infections.

Staphylococcus aureus is a common germ, often found on the skin and in the nostrils of about a third of healthy people, without causing harm or showing symptoms. MRSA can however cause harm when it enters the body, through wounds for example.

It can also cause infections such as boils, or more serious wound infections, chest infections or blood stream infections.

MRSA and other germs can cause problems in hospitals, because people who are unwell are more vulnerable to infections.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA is spread by touch, so washing your hands before and after visiting our wards is very important. Our staff may wear gloves and aprons while caring for patients to stop the spread of MRSA and other bacteria.

How can you tell if someone has MRSA?

People who carry MRSA may not show any clear symptoms. If MRSA causes an infection, then the symptoms can be the same as for any other infections, such as pain, redness, swelling or heat in the affected area. The infection may also cause a high temperature.

How is MRSA treated?

If you have MRSA, we may prescribe cream and washes to reduce the amount of MRSA on your skin.

If you have an MRSA infection, we'll prescribe you with the appropriate antibiotics.

What happens when a patient gets MRSA?

Our staff always take precautions if you have MRSA in order to stop it spreading to others. They wash their hands or use hygienic hand rub before and after touching you, and wear gloves and aprons while providing physical care. If you're unsure whether we have cleaned our hands before touching you, it's okay to ask.

We sometimes care for patients with MRSA in a single room or a separate area for people who have MRSA. The MRSA will be recorded in your medical notes and your electronic patient record.

If I have MRSA, will it harm my family and friends?

MRSA is rarely a problem for healthy people, including elderly people, pregnant women, children and babies. Visitors will not normally need to take any special precautions.

However, it may be necessary for them to wear gloves and aprons if they're helping with washing and dressing you. Our ward staff will advise you and them on the best steps to take.

You can help us keep you and other patients on the ward safe by asking your visitors to:

- Not to sit on beds
- Wash their hands when they arrive on the ward and before leaving
- Keep cuts and grazes covered with a dressing/ waterproof plaster

Will I have to stay in hospital longer if I have MRSA?

Patients who carry MRSA do not usually have to stay longer in hospital. However, if you have an MRSA infection, you may have to stay until this clears up, or continue your treatment at home.

What happens when I go home?

Family life should continue as normal. Being treated for MRSA shouldn't stop you being active, visiting friends or living your life as normal. When you go home:

- Normal domestic cleaning is adequate
- Clothing and bedding can be washed as normal in the family washing machine
- Rubbish can go into the ordinary household waste
- Community nurses will use standard precautions such as gloves and aprons when providing physical care for you

Further advice

You can find further advice from the NHS on how to prevent the spread of infections.

www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/infections

How to contact us

If you need to contact us
or require further information...

Call: **0118 960 5140**

Email: infection.control@berkshire.nhs.uk

www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

