

**Community Information
For Patients in their Own Homes
Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus
Aureus (MRSA)
Infection Prevention Team**

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for **M**ethicillin **R**esistant **S**taphylococcus **A**ureus. It is a micro-organism or 'bug' which can live on people's skin where it does not usually cause a problem. If it gets into wounds, sputum or urine it may cause an infection. It is not usually removed by the more commonly used antibiotics.

How did I get it?

MRSA is passed by contact for example person to person or object to person. The most important way of reducing the risk of spread is by washing and drying your hands thoroughly.

What will it do to me?

You may not notice any physical difference as MRSA can live in most sites of the body and not cause a problem. However, MRSA may cause an infection in your wound, your sputum or your urine. It may slow down the normal healing process.

How do you know I've got it?

It will have been identified from a swab/specimen sent to the microbiology laboratory.

How can I help make it go away?

- Using medication if prescribed.
- Try to wear clean clothes every day and wash them at the highest temperature recommended for the fabric.

- Good general hygiene and hand-washing i.e. wash you hands: -
 - after using the toilet.
 - before meals.
 - before and after touching your catheter or wound (if you have any).
 - when hands are visibly dirty.

Can it be treated?

Yes - it can be treated quite successfully with prescribed ointments, anti-bacterial soap or sometimes antibiotics. If it is not causing you any problems, treatment may not be necessary.

What about my visitors, family and friends?

MRSA does not normally pose a risk for people who are in good health.

Is the nurse at risk if she visits?

No. The nurse will wear apron and gloves when she is attending to you and thoroughly clean her hands when she has finished to prevent MRSA being passed on to other patients.

Do I have to stay indoors until the MRSA has gone?

No. You should lead a normal life doing everything you did before you had MRSA.

Is it acceptable for me to be at home instead of in hospital?

Yes. There is normally no risk to general health from MRSA. If your doctor is at all concerned about the MRSA he can seek advice from the hospital.

If I go into hospital, should I tell them about the MRSA?

Yes, because there are many sick people in hospital who may be vulnerable to the MRSA. You may be given a room of your own until the results of the swabs have come back to see if the MRSA has gone.

Should I have my own crockery and cutlery?

No. Wash all the family crockery in hot soapy water and dry thoroughly.

For more information, please contact the Community Infection Prevention and Control Nurse.

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