

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, a micro-organism or bug sometimes found on different parts of the body. MRSA can be found and passed on by contact with people or objects almost anywhere. It is incorrect to think that MRSA is only found in hospitals.

You may have read about MRSA in the newspapers or seen something on the television.

You may even have discussed it in the past with your family or friends.

MRSA can be identified by performing an MRSA Screen (See below)

What is an MRSA screen?

An MRSA screen is a quick and painless procedure. Swabs are taken from the nose, throat, groin and any wound or broken areas on the body, e.g. leg ulcers or eczema. If you have a urinary catheter in place, a sample of urine will also be sent.

A member of staff will normally perform this procedure for you and it will only take a few minutes.

The swabs are sent to the Microbiology laboratory to be processed, and it will be between 48 and 72 hours before the results are known.

Why do you screen pregnant women for MRSA?

Some people carry MRSA on different parts of the body without being aware of it, or without causing them any harm. MRSA can be passed on by contact or even by touching an object, it is important to screen to be aware of who has MRSA so the risk of cross infection to yourself and others can be reduced. In hospital, there are many individuals who are more prone to infections than others. Individuals who have MRSA can be assessed to see if they would benefit from treatment.

Will I be screened for MRSA during my pregnancy?

If you are pregnant you will need a screen for MRSA during week 30-36 of pregnancy if you meet any of the following criteria:

- You are booked for a Caesarean Section
and/or
- You have had a hospital stay within the last 12 months.
and/or
- Anyone in your household is a known carrier of MRSA
and/or
- You have any skin conditions such as eczema or psoriasis.
and/or
- You have ever had MRSA in the past.
and/or
- You are a healthcare worker anywhere in the health service:- hospital, community or private.

If you feel you meet any of the above criteria, please discuss with your midwife and/or the Obstetric doctor to when you will be screened.

How will I know if I have MRSA?

Your Midwife or the Obstetric doctor will inform you.

If I am a carrier of MRSA, how will my MRSA be treated?

If you are found to be positive, your Obstetric Consultant or Midwife will speak to the Consultant Microbiologist. A decision will be made on whether treatment is necessary for you.

MRSA can be treated in a number of ways, for example: MRSA found in the nose can be treated with nasal ointment; MRSA on the skin can be treated with body washes; and there are various mouthwashes available for MRSA in the throat.

How long does the treatment take?

It is usually five days from the commencement of treatment.

What happens next?

You will be re-swabbed following treatment to see if the MRSA has gone. The first screen will normally be taken 48 hours after you complete your treatment. Two further screens will be taken at weekly intervals.

Sometimes it is not always possible to obtain three negative screens

If you are still MRSA positive when you come into hospital to have your baby, you will be admitted into your own room. The midwives, doctors and healthcare professionals will wear gloves and aprons when they are giving you your care. If you are having a Caesarean section the Obstetric doctors will speak to the Microbiologists regarding antibiotic therapy prior to your caesarean section.

What if I have more questions?

The Infection Prevention Team are available from Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 4.30pm to answer any further questions you may have. Please ask a member of staff to contact an infection prevention nurse for you, or call us on:-

Royal Gwent Hospital 01633 - 238101 / 234921

Nevill Hall Hospital 01873 - 732048 / 01873 732613

An answer phone facility is available on the above numbers or alternatively, please ask a member of staff to page us via the hospital switchboard.

Royal Gwent Hospital 01633 - 234234

Nevill Hall Hospital 01873 - 732732

Please use the space below to jot down any questions you may have.
