

## Patient Information

### Why do we screen patients for 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 causes a problem. If it gets into wounds, sputum, urine, or a cannulation site it may cause an infection. It is not killed by the more commonly used antibiotics.

#### **Why do we screen for MRSA?**

Some members of the general population carry the MRSA bug on their skin or in their nose. These individuals can be identified by screening (swabbing). This means they can be nursed appropriately when they are admitted to hospital. This will reduce the risk of cross infection to other patients. People who are found to be carrying MRSA can be assessed to see if they would benefit from treatment to try and get rid of the MRSA.

#### **What is an MRSA screen?**

A general MRSA screen consists of two swabs that are usually taken from the nose and throat. Occasionally, for certain surgical procedures additional swabs may be requested from the, axillae (armpits), perineum (groin area) and any broken or abnormal skin areas e.g. wound, eczema etc. A urine sample may be collected from patients with indwelling catheters. All specimens will be sent to the laboratory for analysis.

#### **How will I know if I have it?**

If you were screened by your general practitioner he/she will inform you of the results. If you were screened in hospital, the Consultant will inform either you or your general practitioner and advise if treatment is needed.

#### **How will my MRSA be treated if I am a carrier of MRSA?**

MRSA can be treated in numerous ways such as using antibiotic creams, dressings and special antiseptic soaps.

#### **How long does the treatment take?**

It is usually for five to ten days.

