

MRSA Screening before coming into hospital

Information for Patients, Relatives and Carers and Visitors

Bradford Teaching NHS Foundation Trust are committed to reducing healthcare associated infections in our hospitals to ensure that our patients receive high quality healthcare.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus (SA) is a bacteria found on the skin and in the nose, which about one in five people carry without problems. Occasionally, this bug may enter the body and cause minor infections, such as spots and boils, but can cause more serious complications, such as blood infection (septicaemia), infection of the skin or underlying tissues (cellulitis) or pneumonia.

Meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is used to describe Staphylococcus aureus that is resistant to meticillin and other antibiotics which are used to treat Staphylococcus aureus infections.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA is mainly spread from person to person through hand contact. This is why washing your hands and using alcohol-based hand gels are really important. Good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways of stopping the spread of MRSA.

Why do I need to be screened for MRSA prior to coming into hospital?

To ensure you and other patients' health and safety, we would like to find out if you might be carrying MRSA before you come into hospital. Some people carry MRSA on their skin and nose and are described as being 'colonised'.

People may be unaware that they are colonised with MRSA because it does not cause them harm and they do not have symptoms. MRSA can cause harm when it gets an opportunity to enter the body. This is more likely to happen in people who are unwell or in patients undergoing operations.

We need to be aware of people who are colonised with MRSA in order to ensure that appropriate treatment is given before coming into hospital. This is why we screen all patients prior to planned procedures.

If the result is positive for MRSA, we can use a simple treatment to eliminate as much of it as possible, so the chances of you getting an MRSA infection, or passing MRSA on to another patient is reduced.

What happens if we do not find any MRSA germs?

We will not contact you and you will not require any treatment. You will be able to go to hospital for your operation or procedure as planned.

What happens if the result is positive for MRSA?

Please don't worry. The clinic staff or your consultant will get in touch with both you and your GP. You will be given information on how to get a nasal antiseptic cream and a body wash which is applied to your skin and hair.

It is important that you complete the full prescribed treatment course prior to your admission to reduce the risk of you acquiring an infection and passing it to other patients. This means you are less likely to have an infection caused by MRSA during or after your surgery or procedure.

When should I use the treatment?

You need to start using the nasal cream and the body wash before you come into hospital. The nasal cream should be started 5 or 10 days before (depending on which type you have been given). The body wash should be started 5 days before and will then continue when you are in hospital. This will all be made clear in the instructions you receive.

This antiseptic treatment does not get rid of every MRSA germ but it reduces their numbers. This reduces the risk that MRSA will cause you any problems during and after your surgery or procedure.

If I am positive when should I use the treatment?

The treatment needs to be used for 5 days before the date of your operation or procedure. The nasal ointment will then stop after the 5 days, however the body washes will continue throughout your admission. Please can you bring this in with you.

If I have the MRSA are there any risks to my family or friends?

MRSA is not a risk to healthy people.

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If you have a family member who is about to go into hospital please let the ward know.

If you are worried please contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team based at Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust.

Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

Accessible Information

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.