

MRSA Screening

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who are admitted to the hospital within Berkshire Healthcare and their relatives and visitors. This may include those who have a planned, pre-booked admission or who have been identified as having an increased risk of acquiring MRSA.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that has become resistant to Meticillin (a type of antibiotic) and to some other commonly used antibiotics. This means that MRSA bacteria are not sensitive to commonly used antibiotics.

Staphylococcus aureus is common type of germ that can live harmlessly on the skin. It can sometimes cause infections, such as boils and wound infections.

Many people carry *Staphylococcus aureus* in their nose or on their skin, doing them no harm. *Staphylococcus aureus* is not normally a risk to healthy people. The majority of people who have MRSA do not have symptoms and aren't aware they are carrying it.

In some cases, we need to be aware of people who have MRSA in order to ensure that appropriate treatment is given because people are more likely to get infections when they are already unwell or undergoing an operation. These infections can be treated with the correct antibiotics.

More information can be obtained from the leaflet, MRSA – *Information for Patients*.

Please ask member of staff to provide you with one. Alternatively, it can be found on the Trust's website: www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

Why am I being screened for MRSA?

If we can find out who is carrying MRSA on their skin on admission to our hospitals, we can ensure they receive appropriate treatment to reduce the risk to them and other patients.

How will I be screened?

We can find out if you are carrying MRSA by taking a swab from inside your nose, armpit, throat or groin and open wounds or sites. This involves a moist cotton bud swab being rubbed over the area. The results are usually available within three to four days.

Sometimes, we may not be able to test all sites on your body immediately on admission and this may be done later during your stay.

What if I have MRSA?

You may be nursed in a single room. This is to minimise the risk of MRSA spreading to other patients. This will not affect the care you are given. You will also be given a special skin wash which reduces the amount of MRSA on your skin; this will be discussed with you by the team looking after you. The fact that you have MRSA will be recorded in your medical notes and electronic patient record.

How do I find out more?

More information is available from your doctor or nurse. Other people that can answer your questions include the members of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Further Information

For general information about infection prevention and control refer to: www.nhs.uk

Alternatively you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**, who can listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and direct you to further information. They can be contacted on **01189 605027** or bht@berkshire.nhs.uk

How to contact us

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

Infection Prevention and Control Team

Phone: **01189 605140**

www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

