

MRSA

(Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)



Information for patients and service users

What is MRSA? (Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nostrils of about a third of healthy people. If it gets into the body, it can cause an infection. This infection can be minor causing local skin infections such as boils. In more vulnerable patients, it can cause more serious infections in wounds, bones, lungs and blood (bloodstream infections).

Some strains of Staphylococcus aureus have become resistant to Meticillin (flucloxacillin) and some other antibiotics used to treat common Staphylococcus aureus infections.

MRSA - Colonisation or Infection?

MRSA Colonisation

The MRSA is on or in the body without causing illness.

MRSA Infection

The MRSA is causing a medical problem

Who is most at risk from MRSA infection?

People who:-

- are elderly
- are very sick
- have an open wound (such as a bed-sore)
- have an 'invasive device' going into their body such as a urinary catheter.

Healthy people rarely get MRSA infections.

Is MRSA treatable?

Yes. A few antibiotics can still successfully treat MRSA infections.

MRSA colonisation is usually treated with topical antibiotics such as nasal cream and an antibacterial hair and body wash when in hospital. This is to remove or reduce the number of bacteria on the skin in order to reduce the risk of infection.

How is MRSA spread?

The most common way that MRSA is spread from one person to another is by people who are carrying MRSA on their hands. Effective hand hygiene can prevent the spread of MRSA.

What happens if I have MRSA?

You may be moved to a single room. Occasionally this is not necessary or possible, and you will be treated in the ward area.

Health care workers should wear gloves and aprons for close contact with you and remove them before leaving the room. They will then wash their hands or clean them with alcohol hand rub.

How long can I expect to stay in a single room?

This can vary from a few days to a few weeks or even longer. The risks to you and others will be continually assessed.

Can I still have visitors?

Yes. MRSA does not usually affect healthy people. It does not usually harm the elderly, pregnant women, children and babies. Physical contact such as touching or hugging can continue.

It can affect people who have serious health problems, and people who have chronic skin conditions or open wounds.

Visitors who are ill or have weak immune systems should limit their physical contact to no more than casual touching. They should avoid contact with 'body substances' of anyone with MRSA.

Visitors should always clean their hands thoroughly before leaving the room.

Will having MRSA affect my discharge from hospital?

No. As soon as you are well enough, you can be discharged without further treatment or delay. If you are still on any antibiotics or skin treatment these should be completed at home. It is not necessary to take any further swabs to see if the MRSA has gone.

Do I need to tell anyone if I've had MRSA?

Yes. If you need to:

- return to this hospital
- attend another hospital

The staff will take some swabs to check if you still have MRSA on your skin and start treatment if necessary. This will help reduce the risk of getting an MRSA infection in the future.

If you would like more information please ask your Doctor or Nurse, or ask to speak to one of the Infection Prevention and Control Nurses who have special expertise in this area.

Help us prevent the spread of infection in hospital.

Please make sure your hands are clean. Wash and dry them thoroughly and/or use the gel provided.

If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours please consider whether your visit is essential.

If you need this leaflet in a language other than English, or would like to receive this information in large print, Braille or audio, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01934 647216.



Weston General Hospital
Grange Road
Uphill
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 4TQ



Telephone: 01934 636363



Website: www.waht.nhs.net



Twitter: @WestonNHS

For details on how to contact us via email, please visit our website.

Ref: PL_INC_015_4.7_MRSA

Date: 06/05 Last rev: 11/17 Next rev: 11/19

© Weston Area Health NHS Trust