



**Blackpool Teaching
Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

MRSA (Meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)

**Infection Prevention
Information for Patients
and Relatives**



This leaflet aims to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about MRSA.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a type of bacteria (germ) which lives harmlessly on the skin and in the nose, in about one third of people.

Meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a variety of *Staphylococcus aureus* which is resistant to some of the antibiotics we commonly use to treat infection. This can make MRSA more difficult to treat.

People who have MRSA on their bodies or in their noses but who are not affected by this are said to be colonised. It rarely causes harm to the person in this incidence.

MRSA can cause problems when it gets the opportunity to enter the body. This is more likely to happen in people who are already unwell. MRSA may cause abscesses, boils, and it can infect any wound that has caused a break in the skin e.g. grazes, surgical wounds. These are called local infections, which may spread into the body and cause serious infections such as septicaemia (blood poisoning).

How will I know if I have MRSA?

MRSA is found when swabs from skin, nose or wounds or other specimens such as urine or sputum are examined in the hospital laboratory.

Your nurse will inform you if you have MRSA.

How can MRSA spread from person to person?

MRSA can be transferred from person to person via touch. This is the most common mode of spread. It can also be spread via some of the equipment used to care for you during your stay. In hospital there are many patients in close proximity to one another therefore making the spread of MRSA easier.

How can spread be prevented in hospital?

If you have been told that you have MRSA you may be moved to a side room if you have signs of infection. This is to protect other patients who may be vulnerable to infection.

Hospital staff should wear gloves and aprons when caring for you to help minimise the risk of transferring the MRSA to other patients.

Hospital staff and visitors should wash their hands thoroughly before and after attending to you, as hand hygiene is an important way of controlling the spread of MRSA.

What is the treatment?

The treatment given for MRSA is as follows:

- Nasal ointment for your nose, which will be applied to each nostril three times a day for 5 days
- A disinfectant to wash your hands, face and body with, once a day for 5 days
- A disinfectant to wash your hair at least twice during a 5 day period.

48 hours after completing your treatment the nursing staff may have to re-swab your nose and groin and any wound sites or sores. A further course of treatment may be necessary if the swab result is still positive.

The doctors caring for you may also prescribe antibiotics if you have an infection.

Can MRSA come back?

Yes, it can come back, unfortunately it may not totally go away. If you come into hospital again you may have swabs taken again and could be nursed in a single room until the results are known.

Can I have visitors?

MRSA does not harm healthy people, including pregnant women, children and babies. It can affect people who have certain long term health conditions but if you have concerns please ask the nurse in charge or ask to speak to someone from infection prevention.

The most important thing for your visitors to do is to ensure they wash their hands after visiting you so that they do not spread MRSA.

Will I have to stay in hospital longer?

There should be no problem with you being discharged from hospital unless you have a serious infection due to MRSA. If you are on treatment the district nurse may be contacted to ensure it is completed.

Useful contact details

Infection Prevention Nurses

Telephone: **01253 953874**

Hospital Switchboard: **01253 300000**

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offers impartial advice and deals with any concern or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via tel: **01253 955589** or by email:

bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net

You can also write to us at: **Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:

Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator
01253 953397 or **bfwh.trustpolicyteam@nhs.net**

Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call: **01253 955520**

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Author: **Sharon Mawdsley**
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