

20 January 2012

RUH celebrates superbug success

Staff at the Royal United Hospital are celebrating 250 days free of the MRSA superbug.

Since December 2010 all emergency patients have been screened for MRSA on admission to the hospital. This enables us to treat patients who are found to have MRSA either prior to or on admission, reducing the risk of them developing deep-seated infections and also cutting the chances of cross-infection.

Staff have also worked on improving urinary catheter care, and have been using a new cleanser to reduce bacteria on the skin to help improve cannular care.

Yvonne Pritchard, Senior Infection Prevention and Control Nurse, says: "Reaching 250 days without a case of MRSA bacteraemia is a significant achievement and reflects the continued hard work of our staff in maintaining high standards.

"We take the prevention and control of infection very seriously and aim to ensure that no preventable infections are allowed to develop as we recognise the devastating effects that these can have on the recovery of our patients.

"MRSA is mainly spread on hands, so good hand washing is the most important way to stop it spreading. Everybody – staff, patients and visitors – can do their bit to reduce infection by following good basic hand hygiene before and after meals and after using the toilet."

Reducing rates of healthcare associated infections is one of the hospital's top five key priorities for the current financial year.

Cases of MRSA at the RUH fell from six in 2009/10 to two in 2010/11. There has been one case since April 2011.

When an infection does occur, senior clinicians carry out a thorough investigation of the reasons for it happening to identify practices that can be improved and to highlight examples of good practice.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Staphylococcus Aureus is a very common germ that around 30% of the population carry on their skin or in their nose. Sometimes it can cause skin infections such as boils or abscesses. These infections are normally mild and are easily treated.

MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) is a type of Staphylococcus Aureus that is resistant to the more common antibiotics that are used.