

MRSA – Positive Screen

What does this mean?

Around the time of your admission to hospital you were screened for MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus). The test shows that you were carrying the MRSA germ at that time.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus Aureus is a very common germ that around 30% of the population carry on their skin or in their nose.

Sometimes the germ 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.

MRSA, like Staphylococcus Aureus, does not always cause infections, but can live on the skin unnoticed. It was first identified in a hospital setting but is also present in Nursing and Residential Homes and within the general community.

How does MRSA spread?

MRSA is mainly spread on hands, so hand washing is the most important way to stop it spreading. It can also be spread by contaminated equipment or the environment.

Hospital Patients

MRSA can pose a problem to seriously ill patients who may be unable to fight infection. For this reason, it is important to stop the germ spreading among hospital patients

What happens next?

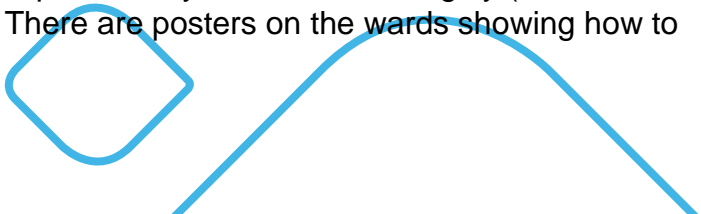
At the time of the test, you were asked to follow a 5-day antiseptic treatment programme to help to remove the MRSA germ from your body. When this course of treatment has finished the nurse will repeat the screening test to check that MRSA has been removed. If the test is positive, you will be asked to repeat the antiseptic treatment programme.

What will you need to do?

The treatment involves washing your hair and skin with special soap and using a cream in the nose every day for five days.

What can I do to help stop the spread of the MRSA germ?

The most important thing that helps stop the spread of the MRSA bacteria is good hand hygiene. Before and after meals and after using the toilet or bedpan wash your hands thoroughly (for 10 seconds) with hot water and soap or use wet wipes. There are posters on the wards showing how to wash your hands really thoroughly.



Will I need to be in isolation?

We aim to separate patients who have a positive MRSA test whenever possible. This may be in a side room or in an area within a ward. By isolation we mean caring for you away from other patients who may be at risk of catching the MRSA germ. All staff will wear gloves and aprons whilst looking after you. Your room will still be cleaned, and cleaning staff will also wear gloves and aprons.

Could I pass it on to others?

Yes, MRSA can be passed on to other people. That is why we aim to place you in a separate area and take extra care precautions such as wearing gloves, aprons and practicing good hand hygiene.

Can I have visitors in hospital or when I go home?

Yes. You can have visitors in hospital and at home. As the MRSA germ is passed on through touch, you and your visitors should simply make sure you use good hand hygiene which is proven to be effective. When your family and friends visit you in hospital, ask them to wash their hands when they arrive and before they leave. MRSA infections are unlikely to occur in healthy family and friends.

How will I know if it has cleared?

We will screen you again after you have finished your treatment and once we have three sets of negative results you will be considered clear. You may be admitted into a single room if you come back into hospital and screened again to check for MRSA.

Will MRSA stop me going home?

Once you are medically fit to leave, MRSA will not delay your discharge. If you live with vulnerable people, any precautions that should be taken will be discussed with you and your carers.

Will I need to inform anyone?

Yes. There are times when it is advisable, for example, if you visit your GP or outpatient's department, or are readmitted to hospital. If you have to come into hospital again, you may be nursed in a single room and the nurses may take specimens to check for MRSA. This does not necessarily mean that the MRSA has come back.

Please ask us if you have any questions at all about your positive screening result.

For further information, please contact:

Infection Prevention and Control 01225 825450

Information courtesy of Tameside Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG

01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.