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**NHS**  
United Lincolnshire  
Hospitals  
NHS Trust

# **MRSA** **(Meticillin-Resistant** ***Staphylococcus*** ***aureus*)**

Infection Prevention Team  
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## ***Staphylococcus aureus* - what is it?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria that lives naturally on the skin and in the nose and is found in 20 to 40% of people. However, if it gets into a wound, it can cause skin infections such as boils and abscesses, which can normally be treated effectively with antibiotics.

MRSA is Meticillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* meaning it is a bacteria that is resistant to many antibiotics, including penicillin. It is therefore much more difficult to treat as there are a limited number of antibiotics available to kill this bacteria.

## **How is MRSA passed on?**

People can carry MRSA without being aware. It does not normally cause problems for healthy people, including pregnant women and children or babies. However, MRSA can be potentially serious for frail people and those who have lowered immunity or are already very ill.

It can cause chest, urine and wound infections and more serious blood stream infections. It can be passed between people through direct contact if good hygiene practices, including good hand washing practices, are not followed. MRSA also lives in the environment or on equipment, if cleaning practices are not maintained.

## **MRSA screening**

The majority of patients are routinely screened for MRSA on or just before admission to hospital.

Results can take a few days to come back, so you may not be told of them until after you have gone home. In these cases, your GP will be informed and advised of any treatment or precautions that might be needed.

Patients in hospital who are found to have MRSA will be asked to use an antibacterial body wash and a nasal cream as treatment. They may also be moved into a single room or separate bay to avoid cross-infection to other patients.

## **What you can do**

You can help to avoid the spread of MRSA by:

- washing your hands after using the toilet or commode and before you eat
- keeping your bed space tidy and uncluttered to make cleaning easier for ward staff
- showering or bathing as frequently as possible
- not touching any wounds or medical devices (for example, drips or catheters)
- letting the ward staff know if you see any dust or dirt on the ward
- asking staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after seeing you
- asking visitors not to sit on your bed (chairs for visitors are available on every ward) or to use patients' toilets
- not sharing items with other patients unless they have been cleaned
- letting the ward staff know if you have had MRSA in the past

## **What the hospital is doing**

The prevention of infection is a priority for United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

To prevent MRSA infections we;

- train staff to wash their hands and clean equipment correctly
- ensure staff are “bare below the elbows” and wash their hands before and after each time they touch a patient or the patient’s environment
- screen patients for MRSA on or before admission to hospital
- isolate patients who have been found to have MRSA in a side room where possible and provide treatment
- monitor standards of hygiene in all wards and departments

- encourage visitors to wash their hands before and after visiting wards (hand hygiene stations (with alcohol gel) are found outside every ward). Alternatively, handwashing sinks (to hand wash with soap and water) are available on every ward
- If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your nurse for advice or ask to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention Team.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please email the Patient Information team at [patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk)