

## Where can I go for advice and information?

Further advice for outpatients can be obtained from unit and department managers, your GP or community nurse.

Further advice for inpatients can be obtained from your named nurse.

Additional patient information leaflets are available. These include "MRSA" and "A Guide to Health Care Associated Infections".

Ask to speak to one of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Visit or contact PALS (the Patient Advice and Liaison Service) based on B-Floor near to main reception (☎ 0191 569 9855)

## Useful websites

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.sunderland.nhs.uk/chs](http://www.sunderland.nhs.uk/chs)

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this guidance with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

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## MRSA SCREENING

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## [What is MRSA?](#)

MRSA stands for Meticillin (sometimes spelled Methicillin) resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ (bacteria) that about 30% of the population carry harmlessly on their skin or in their nose at any time, without any problems. MRSA is Staphylococcus aureus bacteria, which has become resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics. About 1 in 100 healthy people may carry the MRSA germ. For most people this will not cause a problem as they are just 'carrying' the germ, but on rare occasions, it can cause an infection. MRSA can spread between patients so it may be passed onto a patient who is at greater risk of infection for example, those who have wounds or drip sites.

## [How do we find out if you have MRSA?](#)

Before admission to hospital swabs will be taken from some areas of your body. These are known as "screening swabs"

It is normal for many patients to be screened for MRSA before they have surgery. This is now a recommendation from the Department of Health. If we can identify whether you are a carrier of MRSA before you have surgery, we can try to remove the MRSA or reduce the levels of MRSA on your skin by giving you a course of topical treatment. This will reduce your risk of getting an MRSA infection after surgery.

## [What does screening involve?](#)

Screening will be carried out by obtaining swabs from areas of your body referred to as carrier sites, i.e. nose, throat and perineum/groin; and in addition any skin lesions/wounds, urine from catheterised patients and eye swabs if the patient presents with an inflamed/sticky eye.

A health care worker will take these swabs from you.

## [When and how will I get the result?](#)

Processing your swabs in the laboratory usually takes 48hrs. A member of staff will inform you if the result is positive at the earliest opportunity. Do not be worried if you do not receive your result within 48 hrs, in some cases, this process takes a little longer. We will not routinely notify you if your result is negative.

## [Do I need to worry if I have MRSA?](#)

There is no need to worry if MRSA has been found on your skin or in your nose. In the vast majority of cases MRSA does not cause any problems. However, occasionally MRSA can cause infection if it gets into a wound.

## [What happens if I am found to have MRSA?](#)

Arrangements will be made for you to receive self-applied treatment either by collecting a prescription from the hospital, local pharmacy or via your community nurse or GP.

## [What does my treatment involve?](#)

Your treatment will involve a 5-day course of a self-applied treatment called Prontoderm.

## [Will I still be able to have my surgery?](#)

Your surgical team will make a decision whether you can proceed with your surgery. In some cases your surgery may be delayed. You may be required to have a further course of treatment or antibiotics before your surgery. This decision will be made based on a risk assessment of the type of surgery you are due to have, as well as your general medical condition.

### [What will happen when I am admitted to hospital if I am still carrying MRSA?](#)

When you are admitted to hospital you may be nursed in a single room or designated area of the ward. This will help to prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients who may be at risk for example those with drips or surgical wounds. If you are admitted to hospital it is important that you tell the ward staff if you have MRSA or have had it in the past.

### [Will it affect my daily routine?](#)

No, apart from a few sensible precautions you can continue life as normal. You will need to wash thoroughly every day with a clean face cloth and towel. Wearing a clean change of underclothes every day and changing your bed linen frequently will help to get rid of MRSA. You can still attend your GP and hospital visits as usual.

### [Is MRSA a risk to my friends and family?](#)

MRSA does not usually affect healthy people. However friends or family should cover any wound or broken skin with a dressing, and practice good hand hygiene.