

### Is MRSA A Risk To My Visiting Family and Friends?

MRSA is normally only a problem if it gets into wounds etc. It does not therefore normally affect healthy people, including pregnant women, children or pets. However, visitors must have any wounds or broken skin covered with a dressing, and wash their hands or use the alcohol hand gel on entering and leaving your room. They will be asked to refrain from sitting on your bed. Family members or visitors with severe skin conditions, extensive wounds or a poorly functioning immune system should consult with the Ward Sister prior to visiting you.

### Will MRSA Stop my Discharge Home?

No. Your GP and/or District Nurse will be informed of the treatment and will be asked to continue your treatment at home if it has not already been completed. You can still be admitted to a care home where necessary, but you would not be allowed to share the same bedroom as any other clients there. You would be able to use all of the same facilities as the other residents and would be able to join in all of the same activities. If you are readmitted to hospital for any reason, it will important for you to tell the hospital staff that you have MRSA or that you have previously had treatment for MRSA.



If you would like further information or have any questions, please call the **Brent tPCT Infection Control Team** on **020 8901 1103 / 1055.**

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**Brent NHS**  
Teaching Primary Care Trust

# MRSA in the Community Hospital

## Your Questions Answered



### What is MRSA?

*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. *Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) is a *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria, which has become resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics. 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 also gain access to a patient who is at greater risk of infection for example those who have wounds or drip sites.

### How Can I Get MRSA?

Many people are 'carriers' of the germ. They may have caught the germ from their surroundings or from another person, by transfer on clothing or unwashed hands. This germ is widespread throughout the UK and many other countries.

### How Do You Find Out If I Have MRSA?

We are recommending that all patients being admitted to Willesden Centre for Health and Care be tested to find out if they are 'carrying' or 'infected' with the MRSA germ. A set of specimens (swabs) will be collected from your nose, throat, groin area will be sent to the laboratory for testing by the ward nursing staff. A urine sample will also be sent if you have a catheter. If you have any wounds, they would also be swabbed to test for the germ. If you decide after reading this leaflet and discussing it with the nurses or doctors that you do not want these samples to be taken, please just let a member of ward staff know.

### Why Should I Have The Tests?

If you are found to have an 'infection' or to be 'carrying' the germ we can offer you treatment to try to get rid of it. By doing this we can help minimise the risk of yourself and other patients in the hospital from getting infections such as wound infections etc.



### If I Am Found To Have MRSA, What Is The Treatment?

If MRSA is causing an *infection*, then effective antibiotics will be given to treat the infection. The length of treatment varies from person to person. If you are found to be 'carrying' the MRSA germ then the doctor will prescribe a treatment programme for you to get rid of the germ.

This will include an antiseptic body and hair wash, ointment for the nose, and sometimes a course of antibiotic tablets. Following the treatment the nursing staff will again take further swabs over a period of time, to see if the treatment has been successful. Sometimes the course of treatment will need to be repeated.



### Will MRSA Affect My Daily Routines?

No. Apart from a few sensible precautions you can continue life as normal. You will be able to share all of the same facilities and activities as the other patients. However, where possible you will be given your own room with a toilet. The hospital staff will be required to wear gloves and plastic aprons when carrying out any personal care and bed making etc and will be required to wash their hands when entering and leaving the room to ensure no germs are carried from patient to patient. The nursing staff will request that you wash, dress and have any wound attended to in your room, and that you have clean clothes and bed linen on a daily basis. If your family or carers are taking your clothes home to be cleaned, they can be washed as normal.

The treatment will not affect your rehabilitation programme whilst you are an in-patient, and you will be able to socialise with other patients and visitors as normal. You will also be able to attend any other appointments you have, or be transferred to other departments within the hospital as necessary. With your permission, the staff there will be informed of your MRSA treatment so that they take the necessary precautions to stop the germ being passed to other patients and protect you from further infection.