

You can get further advice and information by:

- Asking your Doctor or Healthcare Professional

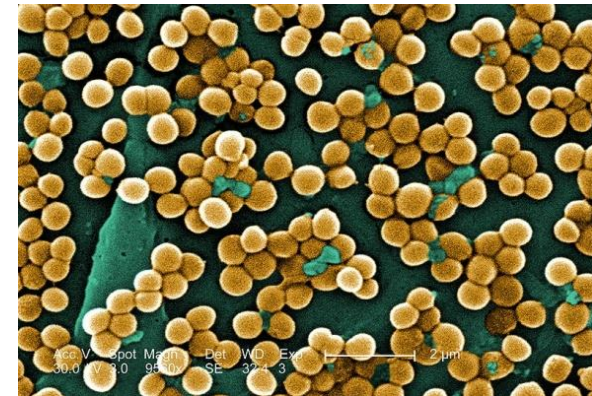
Other sources of information about health and health care:

- **Public Health England** works with national and local government, industry and the NHS to protect and improve the nation's health and support healthier choices.
Website: www.gov.uk/phe
- **NHS Choices** is the online 'front door' to the NHS. It is the country's biggest health website and gives all the information you need to make choices about your health.
Website: www.nhs.uk

This leaflet is provided for your information only. It must not be used as a substitute for professional medical care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust is not responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for ANY form of damages whatsoever resulting from the use (or misuse) of information contained in this leaflet or found on web pages linked to by this leaflet.

Infection Prevention and Control

Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)



Magnified view of MRSA bacterium (germ)

Information Leaflet

Information Produced by: Infection Prevention and Control Team
Publication Date: July 2021 Review Date: July 2024
Document ID: 1141-67707
Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. www.shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk



Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium (germ) commonly found on the skin and in particular in moist areas like the nose, groin and wounds. Usually its presence is harmless, but like many other bacteria can cause infection.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that is resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics and therefore it is more difficult to treat as there is a reduced choice of antibiotics available, although it is still treatable.

Where does MRSA come from?

Approximately 30% of the population carries *Staphylococcus aureus* on their skin or in their nose without becoming aware of it.

Some people will also carry the resistant strain of *Staphylococcus aureus* i.e. MRSA, without being aware of it.

How is MRSA spread?

It is usually passed on by human contact, particularly people's hands. When hands have been in contact with MRSA and are not washed thoroughly the MRSA can 'hitch a ride' to the next person.

Where is MRSA most commonly found?

MRSA can survive in the environment, particularly in dust, but is most commonly found on humans in the nose, armpits and groin. It can also be found living on some open areas of skin such as leg ulcers.

How is MRSA diagnosed?

A specimen such as nose swab, wound swab or urine sample will be sent to the laboratory for examination. These specimens may be taken due to a clinical need, for example inflammation, discharge etc. or as part of the Trust's MRSA screening policy. Please see the Trust's MRSA screening information leaflet.

How is MRSA treated?

Remember MRSA does not always cause infection. You may not notice any physical difference. However, you may be prescribed a specific cream or ointment to eliminate MRSA from your nose and any wounds.

If you develop an infection which requires antibiotic treatment you will be prescribed treatment based on your laboratory results.

If you need to stay in hospital because of your medical condition or because MRSA has caused an infection you may be moved into a single room. This is to prevent MRSA spreading to other patients. Your visitors should wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol hand gel when entering and leaving the ward.

What can be done to help prevent the spread of MRSA?

Use all medicines/treatments as prescribed.

All health care staff should wear gloves and a plastic apron when caring for you. They should remove them and wash their hands when finished. This is to prevent spread of infection from person to person.

Pay strict attention to your handwashing and insist everyone who has contact with you also washes their hands or uses the alcohol gel. If you are unable to use the hand wash basin please use the hand wipes provided.

It is not necessary for visitors to wear gloves if, for example, they are just talking to you or assisting you at meal times, but hands must be washed after all contact. However, gloves and an apron should be worn if they are involved in aspects of your personal care.

Clothing and bed linen should be changed frequently. Laundry should be washed at the highest temperature that the fabric allows.

Equipment and the environment must be cleaned regularly to reduce the buildup of dust.

Additional Information

Family and friends are not at risk from MRSA. To prevent the spread of MRSA, they should wash their hands thoroughly at all times and ensure all cuts or abrasions on their hands are covered with waterproof dressings.

It is safe for pregnant women to have contact with someone who has MRSA.

MRSA can return without your knowledge.

Remember: Good hand hygiene is the easiest way to prevent the spread of MRSA and other germs.