



This leaflet is for patients who are admitted or who will be coming to Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust for an operation or procedure. We advise that you make sure you are aware of the information in this leaflet. If you have any worries or require further information, please contact your hospital doctor, your GP or your Practice Nurse.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* (or *S. aureus*) is a common bacteria that lives on our skin and in the lining of the nose - this is often called being colonised with the germ. Up to one third of the population may carry *S. aureus*.

MRSA is a particular form of *S. aureus*, which has become resistant to some common antibiotics, in particular Flucloxacillin, which is normally used in the treatment of infections caused by *S. aureus*.

Screening for MRSA

By screening we mean testing for the presence of MRSA. Our MRSA screening is part of the national MRSA screening programme.

You will be screened in the Pre-assessment Clinic at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust or at your GP surgery before your admission. When this is not possible, you will be screened on admission to hospital.

If we can find those carrying MRSA before or when they come into hospital, we can manage their care appropriately. This allows opportunity to suppress MRSA and reduce the risk of infection. This also helps to prevent the spread of the bacteria.

How will I be screened for MRSA?

We will take a sample from the inside of the nose and from the groin/perineum. The samples are then sent to the laboratory for testing. The tests are painless.

If you are at all concerned about having these tests, please talk to the nurse taking the samples or contact the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS).

Do I have to be screened?

No, however we strongly recommend that you are screened for MRSA. This will help everyone in the fight against infection.

If you do not wish to be screened please speak to your hospital doctor, GP or nurse. The implications of not being screened will be explained to you. If you choose not to be screened we will make a record of your request. The Department of Health will monitor the numbers of patients who have not received a screen. This information will not include any personally identifiable information. If you have not been screened before your admission, we will offer you a screen on admission.

What happens next?

You will be informed if the result is positive. You will not routinely be informed if your screen was negative.

Testing positive for MRSA

If your test is positive for MRSA, do not worry! In the majority of cases, people have MRSA living on their skin harmlessly. As MRSA is a more resistant form of the *S. aureus* germ, and because certain strains of it can spread within hospitals it is important to take measures to suppress the MRSA at the time of your procedure/admission. For this reason you will be sent or asked to collect a suppression pack. ▶▶

The MRSA suppression pack consists of a nasal ointment and body foam. Details on how and when to use these will be sent with the pack. If you are already in hospital, the treatment will be commenced on the ward.

What should I do to reduce the chances of infection while I am in hospital?

- Wash your hands frequently. Everyone should wash their hands after visiting the toilet, before meals and when they are visibly dirty. If you are unable to wash your hands then please ask a nurse who will be happy to help you.
- It is very easy to transfer germs that live on your hands into wounds. Therefore, it is very important that you do not touch your wound. If you have an indwelling catheter e.g. urinary catheter or drip it is extremely important that you do not touch them also.
- You are encouraged to ask all members of staff to wash their hands before touching you. They will not mind the question and will thank you for the reminder.
- Encourage visitors to wash their hands or use the alcohol hand gel before and after visiting you.
- Visitors should not sit on your bed or place any bags on your bed.

Whatever your screen result is, we want to assure you the prevention and control of Healthcare Associated Infection (HCAI) is a priority for Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and we are committed to controlling the spread of infection. ●

For more information:

- ask your hospital doctor or nurse
- ask your GP or Practice Nurse
- look on NHS Choices www.nhs.uk
- or Health Protection Agency www.hpa.org.uk or Public Health England www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Trust Headquarters, East Surrey Hospital,
Canada Avenue, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH
Telephone: **01737 768511**
Web: www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

The Patient Advice & Liaison Service can be contacted on telephone **01737 231958**.

This leaflet can be provided in other languages and formats upon request. Please telephone 01737 231958 or email pals@sash.nhs.uk

Esta informação está disponível em outros idiomas e formatos, incluindo letras maiores. Para auxílio contatar 01737 231958.

我們可以用其他語言和格式來提供這些資料，包括大字體。欲獲得協助，請致電 01737 231958

આ માહિતી બીજી અન્ય ભાષાઓમાં અને સ્વરૂપોમાં ઉપલબ્ધ થશે, જેમાં મોટા અક્ષરોનો સમાવેશ કરેલ છે. મદદ માટે સંપર્ક કરો 01737 231958

مات دوسری زبانوں اور صورتوں میں بھی مل سکتا ہے جن میں بڑے حروف میں لکھی گئی عبارت شامل ہے، مدد لینے کے لئے 01737 231958 پر فون کریں۔

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The national MRSA screening programme

information for patients, carers, relatives and visitors

