

Pre-admission screening for surgical patients regarding Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

Information for patients from the Infection Prevention and Control Team

What is Staphylococcus aureus (SA)?

Staphylococcus aureus (SA) is a common bacteria (germ) which can often be found in healthy people. It is carried harmlessly on the skin or in the nose of about 20% to 30% of people without causing infection, a state known as colonisation or carriage. It may however cause infection and is the commonest cause of minor skin infections.

What is Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)?

There are many different strains of Staphylococcus aureus and as a result of the widespread use of antibiotics, strains resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics have emerged. These are known as Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). MRSA may be carried harmlessly on the skin or in the nose and people may carry MRSA for varying lengths of time without ill health and be unaware of it. Approximately eight in 10 people who acquire MRSA are carriers.

What will happen if you have MRSA?

Simple swabs from your nose and groin will identify if you are a carrier of MRSA. If you have MRSA you will be prescribed a course of treatment (nasal gel and body washes) before your surgery. This course of treatment reduces the number of MRSA bacteria on your body for the time of surgery and will therefore reduce the risk of wound infection due to MRSA. It is important to understand that MRSA is sometimes difficult to clear completely from the body and may return in the future.

The Infection Prevention and Control Team recommend that it is not necessary to obtain clear (negative) swab results before your surgery or indeed cancel your operation. However, the timing of your surgery may be delayed to make sure that your course of treatment is completed.



When you are admitted to hospital for your operation, if you have MRSA you may be nursed in a single room which will help to prevent bacteria spreading to other vulnerable patients.

Further information for those found to be carrying MRSA will be given by nursing and medical staff as appropriate.

An MRSA patient leaflet is also available to download from the Trust web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation or you can ask a member of staff for a copy.

Further Information

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to either the nurse-in-charge of the ward or the matron. If they are unable to help you or you need further information, please contact a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team on:

- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 22 55 44 extension 725-3625
- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 86 40 49
- **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 63 33 31 extension 723-8202 or 723-8198

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation