

Information for People Who Have Tested Positive for MRSA

You have received this information because MRSA was detected in a sample taken during your healthcare visit. This leaflet explains what MRSA is and what it may mean for you.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus (often called “staph bacteria”) are bacteria that commonly live on the skin and in the nose and throat of humans and animals, including pets.

MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that is resistant to several types of antibiotics. A person can carry MRSA on their skin, in their nose, or in their throat without being ill or having any symptoms. This is known as being a **carrier** of MRSA. You are also considered a carrier if MRSA was first discovered as the cause of an infection.

Sometimes *Staphylococcus aureus* can cause infections, most commonly in the skin or wounds, although other types of infections can also occur.

Is it dangerous to be a carrier of MRSA?

Most people who carry MRSA do not develop an infection and do not become ill because of the bacteria.

However, if you develop an infection caused by MRSA, it may be more difficult to treat than other *Staphylococcus aureus* infections.

How does MRSA spread?

MRSA can be present on the skin and in the nose and throat. It spreads mainly through direct contact with other people.

It can also spread through equipment or surfaces that have not been cleaned adequately. Transmission most often occurs between people who have close and frequent contact with one another.

What can I do to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to others?

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water:
 - before preparing or eating food
 - after using the toilet
 - after contact with bodily fluids, for example after blowing your nose

- whenever your hands are visibly dirty
- before and after visiting a hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare facility
- Keep wounds, cuts, and oozing rashes clean and covered with a dressing or plaster.
- Do not share razors or towels with others.
- Wash underwear, towels, and bed linen at 90°C (194°F) if the fabrics can tolerate this temperature.
- When cleaning your home, pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, cupboard handles, and other commonly touched surfaces.

Can I attend daycare, school, or work if I am a carrier of MRSA?

Children who are carriers of MRSA can attend daycare or school and participate in play and leisure activities as usual.

There are specific rules for people who carry MRSA and work:

- in hospitals or nursing homes with direct patient contact
- with pigs, cattle, sheep, or goats

You can read more about this below.

People in other occupations can continue to work as normal, even if they are carriers of MRSA.

Remember to follow the advice above to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to others.

Who do I need to tell that I am a carrier of MRSA?

You should inform healthcare providers that you are a carrier of MRSA whenever you receive healthcare, for example when visiting a doctor or when being admitted to a hospital or nursing home.

Information about your MRSA carrier status will also be recorded in your medical record. This helps healthcare professionals prevent the spread of infection and choose the most appropriate antibiotics if you develop an infection.

You should inform your employer or educational institution if you are a carrier of MRSA, only if you:

- work in hospitals or nursing homes with direct patient contact
- are a student whose training includes patient contact in hospitals or nursing homes or
- work with pigs, cattle, sheep, or goats

Your partner or other members of your household should inform healthcare providers that they live with, or are the partner of, someone who carries MRSA, when they receive healthcare.

They should also inform their employer or educational institution if they:

- work in hospitals or nursing homes with direct patient contact
- are a student whose training includes patient contact in hospitals or nursing homes or
- work with pigs, cattle, sheep, or goats

Apart from these situations, you do not need to tell your employer, colleagues, friends, your child's school, or daycare provider that you are a carrier of MRSA.

What happens if I am admitted to a hospital or nursing home?

If you are a carrier of MRSA, infection prevention measures may be needed during your stay in a hospital or nursing home to reduce the risk of spreading the bacteria to others. The specific measures will depend on the situation.

These may include:

- A private room with a private bathroom.
- Healthcare staff wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves, gowns, and face masks.
- More frequent cleaning of rooms and equipment.
- In hospitals, isolation may sometimes be necessary. This means you may be asked to stay in your room and avoid using shared areas or having close contact with other patients.

Infection prevention and control measures may also be needed when you receive healthcare in other settings.

Even if such measures are required, you are entitled to receive the same healthcare as any other patient.

Can I get rid of MRSA?

In some people, MRSA disappears naturally, while in others the bacteria may remain on the body for months or even years.

In certain situations, treatment may be recommended to eliminate MRSA. This is known as **decolonization treatment**.

Your general practitioner (GP) can assess whether this is appropriate for you and provide information about the treatment.

If you have any questions about MRSA, please speak with your doctor.