



# MRSA

*Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus*

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I GO HOME?

At home, in most cases, you only need to ensure good hand hygiene. If you require anything further you will be advised by nursing/medical staff. Healthy family members, who do not have wounds, skin diseases, or have diabetes, are not likely to get MRSA.

## WILL I EVER GET RID OF MRSA?

Over time your normal skin organisms may take the place of MRSA. You will no longer be isolated when swabs are negative for MRSA.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Patients in hospital and their relatives should not hesitate to ask medical or nursing staff for more information on MRSA. Further advice may also be sought from the hospital's infection prevention and control team.

**Further information on MRSA is also available from the following websites:**

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

The Health Service Executive

[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) has a "Frequently Asked Questions" page on Staph aureus and MRSA in the "Topics A-Z" section of its website. Information on the current levels of MRSA, and other infections, in Ireland can also be found in the EARSS section of the HPSC website.

[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

The UK Health Protection Agency has background information on MRSA in the "Topics A-Z" section of its website.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website has information on MRSA under its "A-Z Index"

[www.amm.co.uk](http://www.amm.co.uk)

The UK Association of Medical Microbiologists has a factsheet on MRSA available in the publications section of their website.

This brochure has been prepared by the staff in the Galway Clinic



## Information for Patients and Visitors

### STOP THE SPREAD OF INFECTIONS

Proper hand cleaning is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infections.

So the next time you visit a relative or friend in a hospital or a nursing home, the first thing you should do when you arrive is clean your hands. If you need help, ask a member of staff. Healthcare workers should also clean their hands before and after attending to each patient.



### EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE

Clean your hands-say no to infection!



# What is MRSA and how does it affect patients & the people around them?

## WHAT IS MRSA?

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacterium that can reside on the skin or in the nose of about one third of healthy people. It is generally harmless except when it gains access to deep tissues such as broken skin resulting in surgical site or wound infection, or access to the blood stream leading to blood stream infection or infection of other sites.

Initially penicillin antibiotics were effective in treatment of *Staphylococcus* infections but since the late 1960's many *Staphylococcus* strains have become resistant to penicillin.

**These resistant strains are known as methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA.**

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE MRSA?

Patients who have MRSA do not look or feel different from other patients. Your nurse will take swabs from your skin and nose and these will be sent to the lab for testing. You should have the results within 48hrs. If your swabs do show MRSA growth your Doctor will be informed.

## IS TREATMENT REQUIRED?

You may be either colonized or infected with MRSA.

### • Colonization with MRSA:

Colonization means that the MRSA is carried in the nose, or on the skin and possibly in wounds but is causing no harm and producing no symptoms. If you are colonized with MRSA, your doctor may prescribe a lotion to wash with and a cream to put inside your nose.

### • Infection with MRSA:

If you have an infection from MRSA you may have symptoms e.g. a temperature or redness of a wound, this may indicate an infection. Your doctor may prescribe a lotion to wash with and a cream to put inside your nose. The cause of these symptoms will be investigated and if you have an infection due to MRSA the doctor will prescribe specific antibiotics to treat MRSA infection.

## HOW DID I GET MRSA?

You may have acquired MRSA before you came to hospital, or you may have acquired it in hospital.

## HOW IS MRSA SPREAD?

It is usually passed on by human contact most commonly by people's hands. MRSA may also be spread indirectly from the environment that is it may be picked up from a contaminated environment by the hands. When hands that have been in contact with MRSA are not washed thoroughly or cleaned using alcohol-based hand gel/rub MRSA may be transferred from one person to another via the hands.

## HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY CARE?

Whether you are colonized or infected with MRSA staff attending you will wear gloves and an apron. This together with good hand hygiene is to prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients.

You will be accommodated in a single room or a room shared with other patients who have MRSA to prevent further spread of MRSA.

## DO I NEED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS?

Precautions include good hand hygiene as advised for all staff, patients and visitors and that advised by nursing & medical staff e.g. when in hospital do not visit patients in other rooms and on subsequent hospital visits inform staff of the previous MRSA finding.

## DO MY VISITORS NEED TO TAKE ANY PRECAUTIONS?

All visitors must wash their hands on leaving the room. Visitors should wear a plastic apron. It is recommended your visitors do not visit other patients. They should not sit on patients beds.

## DO I NEED TO TELL ANYONE?

You must tell the nurses and doctors caring for you that you have or previously had, MRSA:

- Before or on admission to hospital
- Before admission to a nursing home or a residential home
- Before an outpatient appointment or a visit to your GP.

## WILL I HAVE TO STAY LONGER IN HOSPITAL BECAUSE I HAVE MRSA?

Most patients with MRSA do not usually have to stay longer in hospital. If you have a serious infection, you may have to stay in hospital until it clears up.

We hope that this information will help you and help us in keeping this problem out of the hospital