

**Infection prevention team**

**Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*  
(MRSA) information leaflet**



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### **What is MRSA?**

It is a micro-organism or germ that may be harmlessly carried by many people on their skin and in their noses where it usually causes no problem. If it gets into an area such as sputum, urine or a wound it may cause an infection, particularly in people who are already unwell.

### **What is colonisation?**

Most people who have MRSA are colonised. This means that the MRSA is present in the nose or groin area but doing no harm to the person. People who are colonised will have no symptoms of infection. However if you have healthcare treatment eg operation, line insertion, this may increase your risk of infection. This is why screening and treatment is undertaken for these patients in hospital.

### **What is infection?**

When infection occurs, there will be clinical signs such as pain, fever, redness, swelling or excess liquid coming from a wound. A colonised person with a line going into a vein or a wound will be at greater risk of developing an infection. Some patients will be more susceptible, such as those that have reduced immunity.

### **How is it spread?**

MRSA is spread by skin to skin contact or contact with a contaminated surface.

### **Can it be treated?**

The treatment consists of an antiseptic body and hair wash and an ointment that needs to be applied up your nose. The nurses will explain the treatment to you. There is then a 2 day rest period after which you will be screened again. If MRSA is detected again you will require another course of treatment.

### **Why do I need to be in a room on my own?**

This reduces the risk of other vulnerable patients becoming colonised, and in turn reduces their risk of developing an infection. Medical and nursing staff will wear gloves and aprons when delivering your care and wash their hands or use alcohol gel to reduce the risk of cross-infection.

### **What about my visitors?**

MRSA rarely causes problems in healthy people. All they need to do is wash their hands or

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use the alcohol gel on their hands when they leave the room. If your relatives are assisting with your care, they may wish to wear gloves and aprons when doing so.

### **How can I help myself?**

You can help yourself by washing your hands regularly especially after going to the toilet and prior to eating. Avoid touching any drips or tubes that enter your body and any wound dressings. If you see members of staff not washing their hands or using the alcohol gel we encourage you to challenge them to do so.

### **Will it affect me going home?**

Providing you are medically fit, MRSA should not delay your discharge home. Once home continue normal life. You will be able to attend work as normal but if you work within a healthcare setting and have an MRSA infection you must contact your GP or occupational health for advice.

### **Do I have to tell people that I am MRSA positive?**

You do not have to tell anyone that you have MRSA, however If you are admitted to a healthcare facility other than Wye Valley NHS Trust, it is worth mentioning that you have a history of being MRSA positive. They can then take appropriate action.

### **What if I have to come back into hospital?**

An alert will have been placed on your medical and electronic health records so that if you are readmitted to Wye Valley NHS Trust, staff will be aware of your previous MRSA status. On your admission you may be isolated in a single room and you will have swabs taken. You will be started on the skin cleansing and nasal treatment until the swab results come back, and your current status is known.

### **What if I am pregnant or a nursing mother?**

If you are pregnant, fit and healthy, there are no additional risks from MRSA. Breastfeeding is safe for you and your baby. Follow the usual advice for breastfeeding and if you experience any symptoms contact you G.P; midwife or health visitor for further advice.

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### **How to provide feedback**

Our aim is to provide a quality of care we would want for ourselves, our families and friends. If there was anything that we could have done please let us know via the department/ward staff or the patient experience team available on 01432 372986 or email [PALs@wvt.nhs.uk](mailto:PALs@wvt.nhs.uk) (opening times may vary).

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, Audio tape or other languages upon request. Please contact patient experience team on the above telephone number.

You may be asked to give your opinion on the service you have received. We welcome your feedback as this will help us to improve the care and treatment we provide to our patients.

Wye Valley NHS Trust [www.wyevalley.nhs.uk](http://www.wyevalley.nhs.uk)

Telephone 01432 355444