

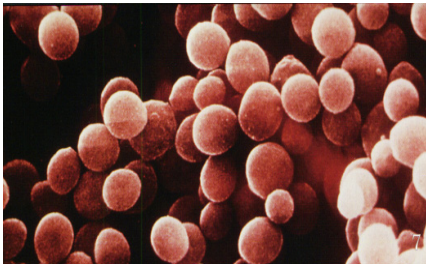
# Keeping You Safe

## Information about MRSA screening for patients being admitted for planned procedures

### What is MRSA?

**M**eticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus-aureus* is a bacteria commonly referred to as MRSA. It is a type of bacteria from the more commonly found *Staphylococcus aureus* family. These bacteria survive harmlessly on the skin and in the lining of the nose and mouth of about one third of the population. However, these bacteria can cause infections if there is an opportunity for them to enter the body, e.g. through cuts or abrasions. The type of infections that *Staphylococcus aureus* can cause range from, boils, abscesses, and more serious infections if they enter the blood stream or surgical wounds.

MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to many of the common antibiotics used to treat infections. A common misconception is that antibiotics are not available to treat infections. This is not true; there is a range of antibiotics that are effective for treating MRSA infections.



Colonies of *Staphylococcus aureus* magnified with electron microscope.

### Why am I being offered screening for MRSA?

We are introducing screening for MRSA for all patients being admitted to Dorset County Hospital who are undergoing planned surgical procedures, in line with recommendations from the Department of Health. If a person has MRSA on their skin surface this bacteria has the opportunity to enter the wound during or after surgery. By screening people we can offer treatment before their surgery to reduce the risks of MRSA wound infections.

This national initiative is being introduced to identify people who may have MRSA on their skin or nasal surfaces. This is called colonisation of the skin or nose, this means that the bacteria are on these surfaces but are not causing any problems.

However, when people are admitted to hospital for a planned procedure we want to ensure that we reduce risks of infections to a minimum. One of the ways we can do this is to screen patients who are having planned procedures.

### **What does screening involve?**

Screening is a pain free procedure. A moist sterile swab will be rubbed in your nasal passage, and a moist swab will be rubbed from your groin area. These swabs will then be sent to the Microbiology Laboratory for processing.

### **What will happen if I have MRSA?**

A member of staff will inform you if your MRSA screening is positive and will initiate treatment for you to start at home before you are admitted to hospital.

If we identify MRSA colonisation on your skin or nasal surfaces we can provide some simple treatment to reduce or remove the MRSA from hair, skin or nostrils. This treatment consists of an antibacterial skin washing treatment and some cream for the inner surfaces of the nose.

### **What measures are being taken in the hospital to reduce infections?**

Bacteria can easily be transferred from the hands of healthcare workers during the care of patients. All hospital staff receive Infection Prevention & Control training. They are trained how to decontaminate their hands properly between contact with patients to reduce the risk of cross infection between patients.

At Dorset County Hospital we have provided alcohol gel at every entrance to the hospital for visitors and staff to use, and at every ward entrance and bed space. Each ward has an identified "hand hygiene champion", and regular audits are undertaken to check staff wash/gel their hands.

Every ward has regular hygiene audits of the environmental cleanliness and actions are taken to rectify areas that do not meet the required standards.

If you are concerned about any aspect of hygiene we would like you to discuss with the member of staff at the time.

### **It is OK to ask staff if they have washed their hands?**

#### **Tell us if you are not satisfied with cleaning standards.**

We also ask patients to take the following sensible precautions during their stay:

- Keep your hands and body clean. Have a supply of moist hand wipes with you for your personal use.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or commode.
- Always wash your hands or use a hand wipe immediately before eating a meal.
- Make sure your bed area is regularly cleaned and report any unclean toilet or bathroom facilities to staff.
- Ask your visitors to use the alcohol gel prior to entering the maternity unit.
- Do not let your visitors sit on your bed.

**The hospital has an Infection Prevention and Control Team. If you have any concerns please contact us: Telephone: 01305 253165 or via email: [ipct@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:ipct@dchft.nhs.uk)**