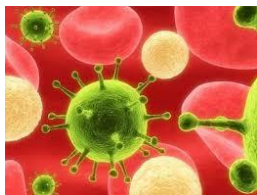


MRSA



MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. It is a variety of common bacteria Staphylococcus Aureus which lives harmlessly on the skin and in the nose and throat of about one third of people. MRSA is resistant to some commonly used antibiotics e.g. Flucloxacillin.

Where is MRSA found?

MRSA prefers to live in the nose, armpit, groin and wounds of people. It can also be found in the environment in dust and has been found in hospitals and the community.

How is MRSA spread?



From person to person by direct skin contact, surfaces or contaminated equipment. MRSA can be spread to the next person on hands that have not been washed thoroughly.

Non-infectious

People carrying MRSA bacteria e.g. on their skin, in their nose or in their long standing wounds such as leg ulcers, who do not have clinical signs of infection, are said to be colonised, but not infected. The MRSA bacteria are simply "hitching a ride" on the surface of the body without causing an infection or illness and are not usually harmful to healthy people. These people are normally never aware that they are carrying the bacteria. Colonisation may be long term.

MRSA infection



When MRSA bacteria infects the body it causes illness e.g. abscesses, boils, local skin infection. It may cause serious illness such as blood poisoning.

Symptoms of infection include fever, redness, pain and increasing wound discharge.

Urgent medical advice should be sought. If infection is present, antibiotic treatment will be prescribed and suppression treatment may be given.

Suppression treatment

The aim of suppression treatment is to reduce the number of MRSA bacteria to a less harmful level. Treatment usually consists of a 5 day course of an antibacterial body wash as well a nasal ointment. At the end of the 5 day course, swabs to check for MRSA clearance are not usually required.

MRSA screening



In accordance with the Department of Health, MRSA screening is routinely undertaken by hospitals. Screening in a healthcare setting/service user's own home is not usually required.

If a MRSA positive result is diagnosed after a service user has been discharged from hospital, suppression treatment may be given following a risk assessment by your local Infection Prevention & Control Team.

Management of a service user with MRSA

It is important to refer to your local guidance. To help reduce the spread of MRSA, standard precautions should always be followed together with the following three key principles.

1. Communication	2. Hand Hygiene
3. Decontamination	

1. Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no justification for refusing to admit service users with MRSA into any health and social care setting.• Service users do not require isolation.• Service users with MRSA can visit communal areas and mix with other service users.• Service users in their own home can socialise in and outside of their home without restrictions.• Healthcare workers should be aware that if a service user has MRSA in a wound, it should be covered with a dressing.
2. Hand Hygiene
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand hygiene using liquid soap and warm water or an alcohol hand rub is essential for healthcare workers, visitors and service users.• Service users should be encouraged to wash hands after using the toilet and before meals.
3. Decontamination
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRSA bacteria can easily be removed from the service user's room by cleaning at least daily with a detergent or chlorine based disinfectant solution.• In a service users own home, the use of chlorine based disinfectant is not required.• Normal laundry procedures are adequate.• Service users own clothing should be washed at the highest temperature recommended by the manufacturer.• Crockery/cutlery should be washed as normal.

Test your knowledge

<i>Please tick the correct answer</i>	True	False
1. Colonisation means that MRSA is causing an infection.		
2. MRSA can be spread by contaminated surfaces and equipment.		
3. If a service user has MRSA in a wound, it should be covered with a dressing.		

Remember:

- MRSA colonisation means that MRSA is present on the body without causing an infection or illness.
- MRSA infection means that MRSA is present on the body and is causing illness. Urgent medical advice should be sought.
- MRSA colonisation may be long term.

Factsheet Activity *Please tick appropriate box when activity has been completed*

Check that your healthcare setting has information for service users and staff regarding MRSA.	
Check colleagues are aware that service users do not need to be isolated.	
Encourage service users to practice good hand hygiene.	