

Instructions for MRSA carriers

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is commonly found on the nasal mucous membrane and in the throat. Staphylococcus that is more resistant to conventional antibiotics than usual is referred to as **M**ethicillin-**r**esistant **S**taphylococcus **A**ureus, or **MRSA**.

An MRSA carrier is a person who has been diagnosed as carrying MRSA in their body (e.g. in the nose or throat). Being an MRSA carrier is not a disease, but rather a minor abnormality in the bacterial growth of the body.

An MRSA infection is an infection caused by MRSA. An MRSA infection is treated with correctly selected antibiotics.

How is MRSA detected?

The presence of MRSA in the body is usually detected based on screening samples collected from the mucous membranes of the nose and throat in connection with hospital treatment. MRSA can also be detected in bacterial culture samples of blood, urine or other secretions.

What kinds of infections does MRSA cause?

MRSA can cause the same kinds of infections as normal staphylococcus. These include nail infections, wound infections and general infections. Today, there are effective medicines available for treating these infections. Most MRSA carriers will never develop an MRSA infection.

Asymptomatic MRSA carriers are not treated with antibiotics.

How is MRSA transmitted?

MRSA is transmitted from person to person via the hands. The bacteria do not spread through the air. For a healthy person, the risk of getting an MRSA infection is low. In normal life and in the home environment, these bacteria are not harmful.

Why do hospitals and other healthcare units want to prevent the spread of MRSA?

Hospitals and other healthcare units treat patients with severe illnesses. The spread of bacteria that are resistant to medicines makes it more difficult to treat infections in these patients. Because of this, hospitals try to prevent the spread of such bacteria. The most important way to prevent the spread of MRSA is good hand hygiene.

In the hospital and in the other healthcare units, MRSA carriers are assigned their own patient rooms or placed in rooms with other MRSA carriers. The patient and all visitors to the room must adhere to good hand hygiene. This means always disinfecting your hands before entering and after exiting the room. The hospital staff provide guidance to patients and their loved ones on how to use hand sanitiser. The staff use protective equipment, such as protective gloves and disposable protective jackets, during treatment and care procedures. The staff do not wear protective clothing when visiting the patient's room to deliver a newspaper or food tray, for example.

Health and Medical Services
Medicinal Services
Infection Prevention

6 October 2025

I have MRSA, what now?

MRSA has no impact on your life at home or at the workplace, your hobbies or your interpersonal relationships. You can continue to meet with friends and relatives the way you used to. If you have open or wet wounds, you should stay away from swimming pools or public saunas. The wounds should not be touched with bare hands.

As usual, wash your hands after going to the bathroom and before handling food. When cleaning, use ordinary detergents available at shops.

Being an MRSA carrier does not increase your family members' risk of getting infected.

As a health care professional, you must ensure that you follow proper hand hygiene at work. This means always disinfecting your hands before touching the patient or his immediate environment and always before putting on and after taking off protective gloves. You should wear protective gloves also when the skin on your hands is not intact, and you are in contact with the patient or his immediate environment. Practising proper hand hygiene prevents the spread of MRSA to the patients that you treat.

Who should I tell about being an MRSA carrier? For how long will I be a carrier?

Please mention that you are an MRSA carrier to any health care professional treating you, such as your doctor, dentist or physiotherapist. This is important for planning correct antibiotic treatment. Being an MRSA carrier does not affect the quality of treatment. You should mention that you are an MRSA carrier to the staff when you are hospitalized or treated in other healthcare unit. Any home health care or home social service provider must be informed about this.

You do not need to tell anyone at your workplace, hobbies, school, daycare centre or anywhere else outside of health care institutions about being an MRSA carrier.

It is unclear for how long MRSA persists in a person's body. Some MRSA carriers have been found to no longer carry MRSA after some months or years, but this varies on an individual basis.

If you have more questions, please contact your local hospital hygienist number _____