Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus

Information Leaflet
**What is MRSA?**

Staphylococcus aureus is a type of bacteria, which can often be found in healthy people, in the nose and on the skin which can cause infection. Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is resistant to some antibiotics commonly used to treat infection. This can sometimes make the MRSA infection more difficult to treat. MRSA is found when swabs from wounds or other specimens are examined in the laboratory.

**What problems can it cause?**

In the main, staphylococcus aureus causes no problems. If it does, the resulting infection is usually minor (affecting the skin, resulting in infected cuts or boils). It is more of threat to hospital patients with deep wounds, catheters or drips, which allow the bacteria to enter the body. People with severely reduced resistance to infection are also vulnerable.

**How long has MRSA been around?**

MRSA has been in hospitals since the 1960s. We endeavour to prevent the spread where possible and control it where appropriate. Unfortunately the widespread use of antibiotics in hospitals and the community has helped to increase the amount of MRSA in the general population.

**How do you get MRSA?**

MRSA may have on your skin before you came into hospital, or you may have acquired it since admission. It is usually spread by and is easily transferred by hand contact.

**What will happen now?**

You may be asked to move to a single room or to a separate part of the ward. The ward staff may take some swabs to see if the MRSA is present elsewhere on your body. Several sets of swabs may be required.
How can MRSA be treated?

This will depend on where the MRSA has been found. It may be treated with an antiseptic soap, creams or antibiotics, or a combination of these. The time scale for treatment can vary and sometimes it can take several weeks to clear MRSA completely. Some people may not require treatment.

Can MRSA come back?

Occasionally MRSA can come back after treatment has been stopped. If a patient with MRSA comes to hospital again they may be asked to go into a single room or too a separate part of the ward, and some swabs may be taken to make sure the MRSA has not come back.

Will it affect visitors?

MRSA will not harm healthy people who visit. They should wash their hands after visiting and should not visit other people in the ward/hospital. If visiting others, visit them first. If you are unsure or concerned, please feel free to discuss this with the ward staff or the Infection Control Nurse Specialist.

Discharge

Normally the patients will be sent home as soon as their general conditions allows. Discharge should not be delayed because of MRSA. If treatment is to be continued at home, the patient’s GP will be informed.

If you require further information, please contact the Infection Control Service at:
Falkirk Community Hospital  01324 624000 Ext 5000
Stirling Royal Infirmary  01786 434000 Ext 4666
Forth Valley Royal Hospital  01324 567490
Patient Appointments/Cancellations

If you have an enquiry about an appointment or would like to cancel it, please call 01324 566249 or email: FV-UHB.RTT@nhs.net

If you can’t go let us know!
Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times. So if you are unable to attend or no longer require your hospital appointment please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print. Please call 01324 590886 (24hrs), fax 01324 590867 or email FV-UHB.disabilitydepartment@nhs.net

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