

# MRSA Screening

Information for patients and carers

Version 1

August 2008

## What is this leaflet about?

NHS Grampian is taking part in a Scottish study to screen (test) all patients for MRSA when they are admitted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary or orthopaedic wards in Woodend Hospital. This study will help the NHS decide if a national screening programme for people coming into hospital would be of benefit.

## Why are patients being screened?

If we can find those carrying MRSA before or when they come to hospital, we can manage their care appropriately. This helps to prevent the spread of the bacteria.

## What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a common germ (bacterium). About 30% of, or 3 in 10, healthy people carry it on the surface of their skin or in their noses without causing them any harm. MRSA is a type of Staphylococcus aureus. It stands for **M**eticillin **R**esistant **S**taphylococcus **A**ureus. It has become resistant to some commonly used antibiotics. However, in most cases, other treatments can tackle MRSA successfully.

## Who will be screened?

All patients being admitted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and the orthopaedic wards of Woodend Hospital will be screened.

## How is the screening done?

A trained member of hospital staff will collect a sample from your nose by using a swab (like a cotton bud). This may cause a tickling sensation. The swab will then be sent to the laboratory for analysis.

## Do I have to be screened?

No. We strongly recommend that you be screened for MRSA. This way you will help everyone, including yourself, in the fight against infection. However if you do not want to be screened, please speak to your doctor or nurse.

## How does MRSA spread?

In general, healthy people are at a low risk of getting MRSA. MRSA mainly spreads from person to person by hand contact. Good hand hygiene is one of the most important and effective ways of stopping the spread of MRSA. This is why good hand washing is especially important.

## What if I have MRSA?

In most cases, MRSA can be successfully treated. If you have MRSA infection, your doctor or nurse will discuss the most appropriate treatment with you. Any other care arrangements such as a separate room will be discussed with you. Your visitors will be asked to pay special attention to hand hygiene. This is to minimise the spread of the bacteria. Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

## What should I do to reduce the chances of infection while I am in hospital?

- Wash your hands regularly with hand-hot water and soap (after contact with other patients or staff, especially after toilet visits and before and after eating.)
- Please keep the number of visitors to a minimum (2 people at a time). If they are unwell themselves, please ask them not to visit.
- Encourage visitors to wash their hands or use alcohol hand gel before entering and leaving your room. Visitors should not sit on your bed.
- Staff would not mind a gentle reminder to wash their hands or use alcohol hand gel before touching or caring for you.

## Where can I find more information?

If you would like to know more about MRSA, you can:

- Ask a nurse or doctor on the ward who will help you.
- Phone NHS Grampian's Free Healthline 0500 20 20 30.
- Visit [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)
- Visit [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk)
- Visit [www.nhsgrampian.org](http://www.nhsgrampian.org)

## What is NHS Grampian doing to tackle MRSA?

We take infection prevention and control very seriously. We use many methods to tackle it. These include regular staff training and hand hygiene campaigns. Screening is just one way we are tackling infections, such as MRSA, in our hospitals. Staff are working hard to ensure that Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) are reduced, to minimise the risk for patients. Our infection control team are available to advise you if you have any queries.

If you have any questions about MRSA screening, please speak to the nurses or doctors on the ward. If you have any suggestions about MRSA Screening, please complete one of the feedback cards located in all wards and departments.

## Data Protection

NHS Grampian and the MRSA Screening Pilot comply fully with the Data Protection Act 1998 in storing and processing patient information. Patient information will be held in the strictest confidence and will be used only for the purpose stated.

## Remember

**Hand hygiene is important to prevent the spread of all bacteria, including MRSA.**

If you would like to know more about MRSA Screening, please contact NHS Grampian's Free Healthline on 0500 20 20 30

For additional copies of this publication call 01224 558638

This publication is also available in large print and on computer disk.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Corporate Communications on (01224) 554400 or email: [grampian@nhs.net](mailto:grampian@nhs.net)

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