

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) Positive

Important information for parents

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
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This leaflet is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.



What is it?

Staphylococcus Aureus is a very common bacteria and is carried on the skin or in the nose. Sometimes the bacteria can cause skin infections. These infections are normally mild and are easily treated. MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) is a type of Staphylococcus Aureus that is resistant to some antibiotics that are used to treat infections.

MRSA, like Staphylococcus Aureus does not always cause infections, but can live on the skin unnoticed. It was first identified in hospitals but is also present within the general community.

How does MRSA spread?

MRSA is carried on hands. **Hand hygiene** is the most effective way of controlling the spread of infection. Parents and visitors must thoroughly wash their hands before handling the baby and when leaving the cot side.

MRSA can pose a problem to babies who may be unable to fight infection. For this reason it is important to stop the bacteria being spread.

If your baby is known to be carrying MRSA, staff will take certain precautions to prevent its spread. This will include the use of gloves and aprons. These precautions will not affect treatment and care.

How will my baby be treated?

There are a number of things that will happen when your baby has a positive test result:

- It will be necessary for us to take further swabs from your baby's skin, to see where they are carrying MRSA.
- It may be appropriate that no action is taken as the MRSA is not causing a problem.
- If your baby has an infection, the doctors will decide if treatment is necessary.

Medical and nursing staff will discuss the most appropriate option with you.

MRSA will be marked in your baby's hospital records so staff can take the necessary precautions on future hospital visits.

What is the risk to me, my family and other visitors?

As MRSA does not usually cause problems with healthy people, your family should simply follow these basic precautions when visiting your baby:

- Keep any damaged skin covered with a plaster or dressing
- **Wash hands** thoroughly before entering and on leaving the room.
- When assisting with your baby's care, you will be asked to wear an apron. Further guidance can be obtained from nursing staff.
N.B. any baby contact should be restricted to parents only.
- If you or your family are visiting your baby, please do not also visit other general wards in the hospital

What will happen when my baby goes home?

MRSA will not affect your baby's discharge arrangements. Any information with regard to treatments for MRSA will be passed on to your GP.

If your baby should come back into hospital you may be given a single room. Skin swabs may be taken again to see if the MRSA has cleared. If you visit any other hospital departments, please tell them your baby has had MRSA.

Do not hesitate to ask further questions if you do not understand anything you have been told, or need further information. While you are in hospital, please talk to the nurse caring for your baby or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Service on 01270 612190.