



Advice from the infection control doctor

MRSA

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant golden staphylococcus.

These are a group of bacteria that are resistant to many types of antibiotics. You can be a carrier of MRSA without being sick, where such bacteria colonize the nose, throat or skin. You will not become sick from carrying these bacteria, but as a carrier of MRSA bacteria, you can spread unwanted infection to a hospital or other health service.

Why does this concern us?

When carriers of MRSA are treated in hospital, MRSA bacteria can spread in the hospital and infect other patients. In-hospital spread of MRSA can result in more antibiotic resistant infections, e.g. skin and wound infections. Hospital inpatients may also develop other serious infections that are difficult to treat with antibiotics. Therefore, it is especially important to avoid the spread of MRSA in hospitals and other health services.

Who should be tested to see whether they have MRSA?

MRSA is detected in samples from the skin, nose and throat.

The following persons are appropriate to test to see whether they are carriers of MRSA:

- ⑩ All those who have previously been identified as having MRSA; but who have not subsequently had three negative control tests

or who over the past 12 months have:

- ⑩ been confirmed as having MRSA
- ⑩ have lived in the same house as a person with MRSA

or who over the past 12 months have been outside the Nordic countries and while there have:

- ⑩ been admitted to hospital or undergone outpatient treatment
- ⑩ worked as a healthcare worker
- ⑩ stayed in a children's home, refugee camp or been on the run

If MRSA is identified, infection survey of immediate family by sample-taking is recommended.

Treatment can be given to try and remove MRSA from the body of carriers.

Who should be treated as a carrier of MRSA?

⑩ All members of a household must be treated when someone in the house works in the healthcare service, is receiving care from a community nursing service, or is scheduled for an appointment or admission to hospital.

⑩ Sanitation is also recommended in households in which someone has an illness resulting in immunodeficiency.

⑩ Any treatment of a child or pregnant woman should take place in consultation with a specialist physician, e.g. working in paediatrics, gynaecology or infectious diseases.

⑩ In healthy individuals who do not have frequent contact with the health service, treatment is often unnecessary, but all those who wish it should be offered treatment.

Work, school and kindergarten

⑩ Carriers of MRSA are not excluded from participating in the workforce outside the health service.

⑩ For those working in the health service, further measures must be considered together with your employer and GP.

⑩ Children who are confirmed carriers of MRSA may go to kindergarten and school as usual. It is not recommended that the kindergarten or school be notified of your child being confirmed as having MRSA.

Method of treatment:

The treatment must continue for 7–10 days.

Washing and disinfecting the body:

- ⑩ Mupirocin nasal ointment is applied to the outermost part of each nostril 2–3 times daily.
- ⑩ Daily whole-body wash (including hair wash) with “Hibiscrub”. First apply the soap to the entire body. Rinse off with water. Then apply the soap to entire body once more. Use a clean towel to dry.
 - ⑩ Where MRSA is found in the throat, the individual should rinse the mouth and throat at least twice daily with Corsodyl mouthwash. Where possible, toothbrushes should be changed daily, or placed in boiling water or disinfected with Corsodyl. If you have dentures, these should be disinfected daily with Corsodyl (see patient information leaflet for Corsodyl).

Changes in daily life during the treatment

- ⑩ Daily change of bedding, towels, flannels and all clothing. The textiles should be washed in the hottest water they can tolerate, as per the washing instructions. Where possible, clothing that can tolerate temperatures of at least 60C° should be used.
- ⑩ In the case of dry skin, moisturising cream that does not neutralize the effects of Hibiscrub can be used. The pharmacy can help with choice of product.
- ⑩ Do not use piercings, wristwatches, rings or jewellery for this entire period. These should be disinfected with 70% alcohol before being used again. Consider discarding jewellery.
- ⑩ Combs, glasses and other objects that come into contact with the skin/hair should be disinfected daily with 70% alcohol. Contact lens users should use glasses.
- ⑩ General home cleanliness otherwise. Ventilate rooms well daily.

Control samples after completing sanitation are performed by your GP. 3 infection-free control samples should be obtained following treatment to confirm whether the treatment has been successful.

All medicines prescribed for treatment of MRSA are prescribed using the Blue Prescription scheme and are free of charge

If you are confirmed as having MRSA, you must have 3 confirmed negative control tests following treatment before you are considered infection free.

Tell your doctor, dentist and hospital if you are a carrier of MRSA

Until you are declared infection free, you must always say that you have MRSA when you:

- ☞ have a GP appointment or medical centre appointment
- ☞ are referred to the hospital
- ☞ attend a scheduled hospital appointment
- ☞ are admitted to the hospital

Then, the hospital can undertake measures to ensure that you receive the treatment you need, and at the same time, that you do not spread infection in the hospital.

Home

At home, you can prevent spread of MRSA by performing normal, good hand hygiene. This means washing your hands thoroughly after visiting the toilet and before preparing food. Otherwise, you can live a completely normal life with your family. There is no reason to worry about yourself or your family members, if you are a carrier of MRSA. It is primarily people being treated in hospital who need protecting from MRSA.