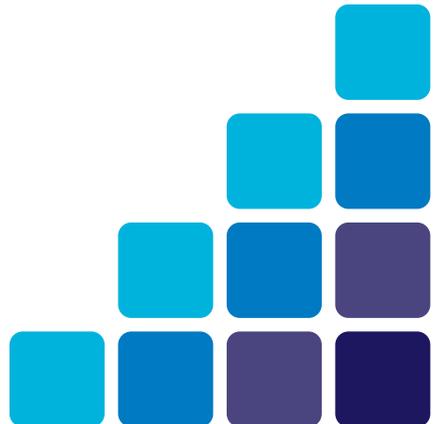




Chelsea and Westminster Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# MRSA

Information for  
patients and visitors



# MRSA

This leaflet has been developed by the Infection Prevention and Control team at the Trust. Please read it carefully. If you have any other questions or concerns please talk to your doctor or nurse. Alternatively you can contact the Infection Prevention and Control team at the hospital where you are receiving your care.

## Contacting us

### **Infection Prevention and Control**

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

**T:** 020 3315 8266/8264

### **Infection Prevention and Control**

West Middlesex University Hospital

**T:** 020 8321 5785

## Notes

## What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of bacteria (germ). It stands for *meticillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus*. It is a type of bacteria that has become resistant to all penicillin-like antibiotics. However, MRSA can be treated with other sorts of antibiotics.

## What is MRSA screening?

This is a simple test to check whether you are colonised with MRSA. To be colonised means to carry the bacteria without harm or any symptoms. Swabs may be taken from several places, such as your nose, groin and any damaged skin. This is painless and only takes a few seconds. The results will be available within a few days.

## When and where will I be screened?

If you are being admitted for an operation, you will usually be screened in the preassessment clinic or sometimes at your GP surgery. You may also be screened when you are admitted to hospital, either in the Emergency Department (A&E) or on the ward. The swabs will be taken at the same time as other checks, such as blood pressure and blood tests.

## I've been told I carry MRSA, what does this mean?

Do not worry. Many people carry MRSA on their skin or in their nose—it does not make them ill and they are not normally a risk to other people (this includes older people, pregnant women, children and babies).

We all carry bacteria and usually it doesn't cause a problem. However, when a person with MRSA is admitted to hospital for a procedure that involves breaking the skin, then there is a risk that MRSA may enter the body and cause an infection.

If you have MRSA on your skin, you may need topical treatment to remove it. This is known as decolonisation.

Treating MRSA reduces the chance of your MRSA causing an infection in you or passing on MRSA to another patient. Therefore, you may not be able to have your planned operation or procedure straight away. You may need to be treated first to protect you and other patients from possible infection. If you are not already admitted to hospital, you will be contacted by the hospital or your GP, who will let you know what you need to do next. They will explain more about the treatment.

If you are swabbed in hospital and are found to be MRSA-positive, you may be nursed in an isolation room or with other patients carrying MRSA on their skin. This is to minimise the risk of spreading MRSA to other vulnerable patients.

If you are not carrying MRSA you are unlikely to be contacted by the hospital or your GP.

## Can I still have my operation?

Yes, in most cases. If you are due to have an operation or procedure you will be asked to commence the five-day topical treatment for your nose and skin—as described below—four days before your planned admission. It is important to follow the instructions in this leaflet to maximise the success of the treatment which will reduce your chance of infection.

## What if my operation is urgent?

If your operation is urgent and you must go to hospital quickly, you may be started on the treatment as soon as possible and might be admitted to an isolation room in the hospital.

## Can I still have visitors?

Yes. You can still have visitors, including children and pregnant women. You are no risk to them. Visitors do not need to wear gloves or an apron. Always check the guidance on visiting with your nurse. Visitors should always clean their hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub before and after visiting anyone in hospital.

## Going home

If you are otherwise well enough, your going home date will not be delayed even if you are carrying MRSA on your body. MRSA is not a danger to healthy family, friends or the general public, so there are no special precautions. Handwashing and general environmental cleanliness is all that is required.

## What risks are associated with using the MRSA treatment?

Most people do not experience problems. If any problems develop, you should stop using the treatment immediately and tell your doctor or nurse.

The products normally used for topical treatments are:

- **Nose:** Bactroban® nasal ointment (mupirocin 2% which is an antibiotic)
- **Body:** 4% chlorhexidine (an antiseptic wash)—common brands are Hydrex® and Hibiscrub®

If you are sensitive to or have an allergy to chlorhexidine, there is an alternative available called Octenisan® wash lotion which can be used instead.

# Topical treatment instructions

## How do I use the nasal ointment/cream?

A small amount of Bactroban® nasal ointment, about the size of a match-head, should be placed on a clean cotton bud or on your little finger and applied to the inside front part of each nostril. The nostrils should be closed by pressing the sides of the nose together and this will spread the ointment through your nostrils. Wash your hands well after use.

## Bactroban® nasal ointment step-by-step guide

Bactroban® nasal ointment should be used **three times a day** for **five days**.

1	2	3	4	5	6
					
Wash and dry your hands	Unscrew the cap and squeeze a small amount of ointment, about the size of a match-head, onto your little finger	Apply ointment to the inside of one nostril	Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the other nostril	Close your nostrils by pressing the sides of the nose together for a moment—this will spread the ointment inside each nostril	Wash and dry your hands, then replace the cap on the tube

## How do I use the body wash?

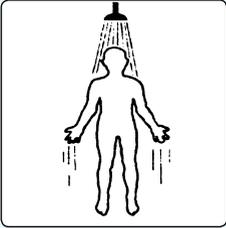
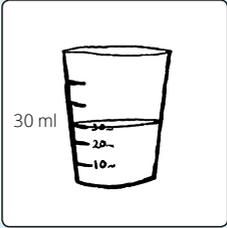
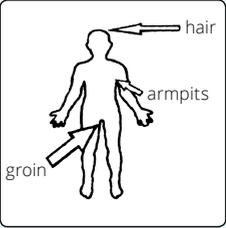
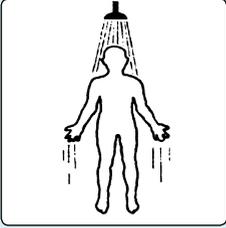
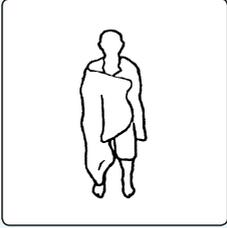
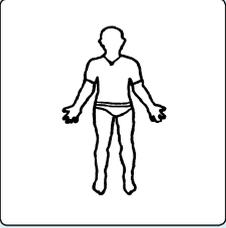
The body wash should be used undiluted as a liquid soap. Apply it directly to wet skin with your hands or a cloth. Leave it in contact with your skin for at least one minute. Apply the body wash all over your body, paying particular attention to the areas around your nose, between your legs, under your arms and your feet. Wash it off, preferably in a bath or by showering, then repeat (so that you have washed twice). See diagram on the next page.

You should dry yourself with a clean towel afterwards and put on clean clothes. You should also wash your hair using the body wash. You can use hair conditioner afterwards. The body wash should be used daily for five consecutive days. Hair should be washed as a minimum on day two and day four, but can be washed every day if desired.

Ideally, bed linen and clothing/nightwear should be changed daily. They should be washed at 40°C (warm cycle) and tumble dried and/or ironed.

## Body wash step-by-step guide

Topical treatment of the nose and body is for **five days** in total.

<p><b>1</b></p>  <p>Ensure that your hair and body are wet</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>  <p>Put 30 ml of the lotion onto a damp washcloth</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>  <p>Apply over the hair and body, paying special attention to your armpits and groin area—leave on your skin for <b>one minute</b> before rinsing</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>  <p>Rinse off thoroughly</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>  <p>Dry with a clean, dry towel</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>  <p>Put on clean underclothes/nightwear every day</p>

## Recording your treatment

You or your carer can record the applications in the table below.

		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Nasal ointment	Morning					
	Noon					
	Evening					
Body wash						
Hair						

## Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns or wish to give feedback about services, your care or treatment, you can contact our PALS service. Send us your comments or suggestions on one of our comment cards, available at our PALS offices on the ground floor of each hospital, or complete the feedback form on our website [www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals](http://www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals).

We value your opinion and invite you to provide us with feedback.

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**E:** [wmpals@chelwest.nhs.uk](mailto:wmpals@chelwest.nhs.uk)



## Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

NHS Foundation Trust

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SW10 9NH

### Switchboard

020 3315 8000

### West Middlesex University Hospital

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Middlesex

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### Switchboard

020 8560 2121

### Website

[www.chelwest.nhs.uk](http://www.chelwest.nhs.uk)

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**Speak to your clinician**