



Patient Information

# MRSA bacteria





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# Preface

This brochure gives you more information about MRSA bacteria, what the symptoms are and how it is treated. Do you still have questions after reading this brochure? Do not hesitate to ask them. Your doctor and nurses will gladly give you more information.

## Information on MRSA

### What is MRSA?

MRSA is commonly called hospital bacteria because it is often found in hospitals and nursing homes.

The abbreviation MRSA stands for: Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus.

Staphylococcus aureus is a 'normal' skin germ found on many people. The MRSA bacterium is resistant to many types of antibiotics, making MRSA infections more difficult to treat.

### How is MRSA transmitted?

MRSA is transmitted mainly by the hands. Strict hand hygiene is, therefore, required from all our health professionals, visitors and patients to prevent spreading MRSA. Do not hesitate to ask if you have any doubt whether our employees have disinfected their hands. You can ask the nursing staff for the brochure 'The importance of good hand hygiene'.

### Do MRSA bacteria make you feel sick?

People who have contracted MRSA bacteria may carry the bacteria for a long time without having any complaints. Usually the bacteria disappear automatically after a few weeks or months.

As a 'carrier', however, one can infect people with reduced resistance. With these people, MRSA can cause serious inflammations in e.g. the lungs, the blood or a wound.

### How is the follow-up organised?

During your stay in hospital, control screenings (using swabs) will be carried out on a regular basis to check whether you are still carrying the infectious germ or whether the treatment used has worked.

Should you be readmitted, another control screening will be done to check whether you are still carrying the infectious germ.

## Treatment

### You may have been in contact with MRSA bacteria

The hospital can perform a specific search for the bacteria by taking cultures. For this, the nurse will take a sample from places this germ is commonly found (throat, nose, groin, perineum, wounds, ...).

Cultures are also taken if:

- you were recently treated in or admitted to another hospital or institution;
- MRSA bacteria were found on you in the past;
- if you have been in hospital for a long time;
- in the context of outbreak research.

If MRSA bacteria are found, treatment is started to prevent spreading. The treatment consists of applying nasal ointment and washing the body and hair with disinfecting soap.

### Isolation precautions

In the hospital, we try to prevent the spreading of MRSA bacteria by treating MRSA carrier patients in isolation.

- During your stay in hospital, we aim to treat you in a single room.
- On your room door, a card is posted listing the isolation precautions to be followed to prevent spreading the bacteria.
- Hospital staff entering your room wear a mouth-nose mask, an apron and gloves.
- If you need to leave the room, do wear a mouth-nose mask. The nurse will give you such mask.
- You are not allowed to leave the room, except for tests or treatment. Because it would require supplementary precautions. To facilitate taking these precautions, your appointment will be planned at the end of the day.
- Your family can take your laundry home. Immediately upon arriving at home, the laundry must be washed in the washing machine at a temperature of at least 60 ° C. If this is not possible, use the

highest possible temperature setting on your machine and use a pre-wash program.

You are asked to pay extra attention to proper hand hygiene when leaving the room. To this end, hand alcohol is provided in every patient's room.

## Visitors

Visitors are allowed. MRSA is not dangerous to healthy people nor to pregnant women. Visits by weakened persons or babies are not recommended and are best avoided.

Every visitor must comply properly with the 'precautions to be taken' as prescribed on the isolation card posted on the room door. Visitors are requested not to visit other patients in the hospital after visiting you.

## Back at home

When you get back home, it is not necessary to take the same precautions as in hospital. Your daily personal hygiene is important, though. Use regular liquid soap to wash your hands regularly and thoroughly. Do not share your towel or wash mitt with others. You do not have to take any special precautions for washing clothes, bed linen or for maintenance of the house.

Social contacts may be resumed as before, but avoid direct bodily contact (kissing, shaking hands) with seriously ill or weakened persons.



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