

PATIENT INFORMATION

Staphylococcus Aureus Screening for Planned Admissions

What is Staphylococcus aureus?

Micro-organisms (germs, bacteria) are all around us but can only be seen down a microscope. Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria found mainly in the nose and on the skin in over 30% of the population and causes no problem at all. MRSA is an antibiotic resistant form of Staphylococcus aureus and it is much more unusual to find it.

Why Screen?

After surgery, there is a wound on the skin which takes days to heal completely and during this time micro-organisms can spread from the surrounding skin into the wound. If Staphylococcus aureus enters a wound it can cause an infection.

What is Screening?

Screening consists of taking swabs from certain areas on your body where we know Staphylococcus aureus can be carried, even if there are no signs of infection.

Before your operation, at the assessment stage, you will be screened for MRSA as a routine precaution and the nose swab taken will also be screened for Staphylococcus aureus at the same time.

There is a small chance that the swabs taken may fail to identify the Staphylococcus aureus bacteria even if you are a carrier. This may happen if the number of Staphylococcus aureus bacteria present on your body is very small or it is present in a part of the body that has not been swabbed. It is possible that if you are swabbed again in the future Staphylococcus aureus may be identified.

What if my screen is positive to Staphylococcus aureus?

If you are identified as carrying Staphylococcus aureus, a 'suppression therapy' pack will be sent to you at home along with instructions on how to use it. **It will not affect your appointment or admission for surgery.** This is the use of antiseptic skin solutions and ointments to the nose, to reduce the levels of bacteria before you have your operation or procedure. We may also give you antibiotics immediately before the operation. Reducing the number of Staphylococcus aureus bacteria on the skin reduces the chances of a Staphylococcus aureus infection following surgery.

If you have any questions you are welcome to contact the Infection Prevention & Control Team, Tel. (01803) 655757, who can visit you when you come into hospital for your procedure. Any urgent questions can be answered via the telephone.

If my Screen is positive will the staff treat me differently?

Staphylococcus aureus is a common bacteria and the staff will not treat you any differently than other patients.

Remember - this is a bacteria found mainly in the nose and on the skin in over 30% of the population and causes no problem at all.

If you have not heard in 5 working days then your result has come back as Staphylococcus aureus below detectable levels and no further action needs to be taken.

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, please contact:

The Infection Control Support Department Tel. **(01803) 655757** and speak to one of the Infection Control Nurses

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.