

MRSA Information for Parents

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus. Staphylococcus aureus is a common bacterium which is found on the skin of many people. This is quite normal and does not necessarily mean that the affected person becomes ill. MRSA is a type of S. aureus which has become resistant to some commonly used antibiotics — in particular Flucloxacillin.

MRSA is no greater risk to healthy individuals than other bacteria we carry on our skin. It can be contracted via the hospital or general community and often is washed away from our skin without any treatment.

Colonisation or Infection with MRSA

All babies in the Neonatal unit are routinely screened for MRSA every week. This is done by taking swabs from baby's nose and skin. If your baby carries MRSA in these areas without any signs of infection, it is called colonisation. No intravenous antibiotics are required for these babies. A nasal ointment and a special soap may be used for 5 days to reduce/eradicate the MRSA on your baby's nose or skin while staying in the Neonatal Unit. If your baby has a temperature and/or other signs that may indicate an infection, the cause of these signs will be investigated. If your baby has an infection due to MRSA, the doctors will decide which antibiotics to give. These will usually be given through an intravenous infusion (into a vein).

How to Stop MRSA Spreading?

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 in the Neonatal Unit.

If your baby carries MRSA, staff will take certain precautions to prevent its spread including transferring your baby to a single room and wearing gloves and aprons. Treatment and care for your baby is not affected by these precautions.



Precautions for Parents and Visitors

When caring for your baby it is not necessary for you to wear gloves and aprons as you are not going to be touching other babies in the neonatal unit. However, please ensure you always wash your hands on entering the Unit and before you leave. Once your baby is back at home, normal hygiene is sufficient. Once out of the hospital environment the MRSA will often disappear.

Do I Need to Tell Anyone?

If your baby needs admission to any healthcare facility, inform them that your baby had MRSA when last in hospital. If a family member in close contact with your baby is admitted into a healthcare facility, she/he should inform them about being in contact with MRSA.