What is MRSA?

- There are lots of germs on our skin and in the air we breathe.
- Most of the germs will not hurt us. Some of the germs will help us but a small amount of the germs can make us very ill.
- MRSA is a type of germ.
- Some healthy people have MRSA on their skin and in their nose. It does not hurt them unless it gets into their body through a cut or a sore.
- MRSA can cause problems in hospitals.
- Having an operation or being on a drip can let the germs get into a patient’s body.
- MRSA is a type of germ that cannot be killed with normal medicines. It can be treated with special medicine.
How do you know if someone has MRSA?

- Sometimes MRSA can live in your body. This will not make you ill or hurt you. This is called ‘carrying MRSA’.

- People who carry MRSA do not look or feel different to anyone else.

- MRSA is only a problem if it gets inside your body. This might be through a cut, during an operation or by a hole in your skin for a drip.

- When MRSA gets into your body it causes an infection.

- People who have the MRSA infection may feel unwell or have a high temperature. The cut that the infection goes into may look red and sore.

- If someone has a cut on their body, that is red and sore, it might not be infected by MRSA. Doctors can do tests to find out which germs are causing the infection.
How do doctors and nurses care for people with MRSA?

- A nurse might rub cotton buds on different parts of the patient’s body to check if they carry MRSA. This is called taking a swab.
- People who carry MRSA may be given special shampoo and body wash to use to get the MRSA off their skin.
- People who carry MRSA and people who have an MRSA infection can be treated with medicine. This is normally through a drip in their arm.

How does MRSA spread?

If people have MRSA, the things they touch could get MRSA germs on them. If someone else touches the same things, the MRSA germs could get onto their skin too.

How do doctors and nurses stop MRSA spreading?

Doctors and nurses need to take special care when they look after patients with MRSA. This is so they do not give it to other people.
Things to do to stop other people getting MRSA

- Everyone should clean their hands before and after they touch patients.
- Hands can be cleaned with soap and water or alcohol hand rub or gel.
- Doctors and nurses will wear gloves and aprons when they care for a patient with MRSA.
- Patients who have MRSA may be moved to a room on their own or into a room with other people who have MRSA.

Do people have to stay in hospital longer because they have MRSA?

- People with an MRSA infection may have to stay in hospital until they are feeling better.
- People who carry MRSA do not have to stay in hospital longer than normal.

Can MRSA affect friends and family visiting patients in hospital?

Healthy people who visit someone in hospital do not normally catch MRSA.

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Need help?

Our Customer Care Team can support you.
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