

Information to carriers of MRSA bacteria

A strain of Staphylococcus bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics has been found in your sample. These bacteria are known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). Staphylococci are bacteria that are found abundantly on healthy human skin and mucous membranes. The bacteria found in your sample differ from normal bacteria in that some antibiotics are not effective against them. Persons diagnosed with MRSA (e.g. on the skin or in a wound) are called MRSA carriers, regardless of whether they have any symptoms or not

MRSA carriers outside the hospital and treatment units

These bacteria are harmless in normal everyday life and the home environment. You may be in contact with other people, work and engage in leisure activities just like before. However, if you have any sores or wounds, they must be covered. You may visit public swimming baths or saunas if you wish, unless you have open or purulent sores, incontinence or cannulas/catheters that pierce the skin. Good hand hygiene is the most important means of preventing the spread of infections. At home, washing the hands with soap and water is sufficient. A personal hand towel must be used, and a separate hand towel should be reserved for guests.

Things to take into consideration at home:

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water every time you go to the bathroom, before preparing and handling food, and before meals.
- Wash your hands and dry them carefully with a single-use towel or personal hand towel (e.g. a paper towel) before and after handling wounds and catheters.
- All equipment used for wound care or the like as well as toiletries (such as toothbrush and razor) are for personal use only.
- At home, use of normal cleaning products is sufficient.
- Dishwashing, laundry and waste disposal are handled as normal. Any bandages used are placed in a bag that is closed and disposed of with household waste.
- Others living in the same household are exposed to MRSA, but the infection is seldom harmful to healthy persons.
- A designated hand towel for guests should be available in the bathroom. Another alternative is to use single-use towels.
- You may move about outdoors and visit people just like before. Wash your hands before leaving home. If you visit anyone who is ill or in poor health, hand hygiene is particularly important.

MRSA carriers in hospital

In hospital, MRSA carriage requires some precautions, but it must not impair the quality of treatment or rehabilitation.

In the hospital setting, it is important to prevent the bacteria from spreading to other patients. MRSA may cause a serious infection in patients in poor health. In hospitals and other care facilities, MRSA may cause an epidemic unless appropriate precautions are taken. While you are in hospital, you will be treated in a single room with so-called contact precautions. This means that you are placed in a private room (other MRSA carriers may sometimes be placed in the same room). While you are in hospital or other care facility, proper use of hand sanitiser is crucial. The staff will instruct you on how to use hand sanitiser. The staff will wear protective gloves and coats while they examine you or during care procedures. If necessary, they will also wear surgical masks.

As the spread of infection to other patients in the ward must be prevented, you should not move about in the common areas on the ward. Talk to the health care staff; they can suggest rehabilitation activities and exercise that will minimise the risk of spreading MRSA to others. In order to prevent the spread of bacteria while in hospital, hand sanitiser should be used to disinfect the hands when leaving your own room, after going to the bathroom, and when entering a room. The nursing staff will show you how to use hand sanitiser. Hand sanitiser kills a large proportion of the bacteria on your hands; this prevents the spread of MRSA to the environment and other patients. If you have exuding wounds, a nurse will always cover them before you leave the room. Visitors should also use hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the ward.

If you are scheduled to have surgery, the fact that you are MRSA carrier should be taken into account when preparing for the procedure (e.g. in prophylactic antibiotic selection). This helps minimise the risk of surgical wound infection.

You may visit the Outpatient Clinic as normal. The Hospital District has guidelines for the procedures required. In hospital, the use of hand sanitiser is crucial. The health care staff will use protective clothing during care procedures and examinations.

MRSA and the carrier register

As stipulated by the Communicable Diseases Act, the hospital district maintains a register of persons diagnosed as MRSA carriers. The name and personal identity code of the carrier is entered in the register. The information in the register is confidential and may be accessed by the hospital district's infection control nurse and infection control physician. A note indicating your MRSA carrier status will be entered in your patient journal. Your local health care centre will also be informed. A note on your MRSA carrier status will also be entered in the National Archive of Health Information KANTA, but this may take some time due to technical reasons. This procedure is based on the Communicable Diseases Act. In addition to preventing infections in hospital and institutional care settings, the aim is to help the doctor treating you to select the right antibiotic if you contract an infection with symptoms. You should mention your MRSA carrier status when using health care services.

Family members and MRSA

Please inform the people who live in the same household as you that you have been diagnosed with MRSA. They can lead normal lives without any precautions, but if they are hospitalised in Satakunta, they will be tested for MRSA. The fact that they may have been exposed to MRSA could be important if they get an infection with fever.

If you are working in a hospital or institutional care setting, or if someone close to you (someone living in the same household or someone closely involved in your care) is working in such a setting, we recommend that you contact us by phone. Please get in touch if you are scheduled for surgery or a medical procedure.

Contact information

Infection Unit

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