

MSSA & MRSA Preoperative Screening Information

***Staphylococcus aureus* & MRSA Preoperative Screening Information**

What are *Staphylococcus aureus* and MRSA?

Staph aureus is a germ usually found on or in a person's skin, nose and mucous membranes. Methicillin is a type of antibiotic used to treat infections caused by *Staph aureus*. If *Staph aureus* is sensitive to the antibiotic Methicillin (meaning Methicillin can cure the infection), it is called **Methicillin Sensitive *Staph aureus*** (MSSA). MRSA stands for **Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus***. Methicillin would not be effective to treat a MRSA infection; however, there are other antibiotics that can be used.

What is infection vs. colonization?

An infection means that the germs that are in or on the body are causing illness. Symptoms may include fever, a high white blood cell count, pus from a wound, or pneumonia. Germs can also be in or on the body and not cause illness. This is called colonization. People who are colonized have no signs or symptoms of illness. They simply carry the bacteria on their body. People may be colonized with *S.aureus* or MRSA, or they may cause infections.

Who will be screened for *Staph aureus* and MRSA?

An important part of the preoperative evaluation is the identification of possible sources of infection. Patients having elective surgical procedures at OSS Orthopaedic Hospital will be screened for *Staph aureus* and MRSA during Preadmission Testing. If they're found to be a *Staph aureus* or MRSA carrier, they will be given a prescription for mupiricin or bactroban to apply to both nostrils for 5 days prior to surgery.

Will it hurt?

NO! A cotton swab will be carefully inserted into the nose. It does not hurt but it may tickle.

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Why are patients screened for Staph aureus and MRSA before surgery?

While people can carry *Staph aureus* and MRSA on the skin without any problems, it may increase their chances of developing a postoperative infection. Our program is a precautionary measure that identifies patients that carry these bacteria and treats them prior to surgery to help lower the risk of developing a surgical site infection.

All patients who are found to be positive for MRSA or *Staph aureus* colonization and are having surgical procedures will be given a CHG Kit to wash with 5 days prior to surgery. The kit contains a special soap called chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) and 5 disposable wash cloths that are used to help decrease the amount of bacteria on the skin prior to surgery. They will also be given a prescription for an antibiotic (mupirocin) to apply in each nostril twice a day for 5 days prior to surgery.

What will this mean for my hospital care?

Patients that are positive for MRSA will be placed on contact precautions during their hospitalization. This means that hospital staff and visitors will wear gowns and gloves when entering the room. All of these steps are to keep these germs from spreading to others.

What precautions can I take to prevent the spread to other patients or family members?

Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself and others around you. Here are some recommendations that help to prevent the spread of MRSA.

- When you are in the hospital use the alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers – they are located throughout the building and in your room. Use them, they are there for you. As you leave and enter your room, wash your hands.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors, or toothbrushes.
- It is acceptable to ask health care workers, “Did you wash your hands?” before they attend to you. They could use a friendly reminder just like the rest of us.

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- We will be glad to have an Infection Prevention Specialist answer any additional questions that you may have. If you would like to speak to an Infection Prevention Specialist, please inform your nurse or healthcare provider.

This information is provided to you as a guide only, and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have questions about your health, physical fitness or medical condition, you should seek the advice of your physician or other health care provider.