



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **MSSA (Meticillin Sensitive Staphylococcus Aureus)**

**MSSA screening for pre-assessment patients**

Issued by the Infection Control Department

## Introduction

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust makes every effort to reduce the risk of patients developing a post-operative infection. As you are having an orthopaedic operation at the trust we would like to screen you for MSSA.

## What is MSSA?

You may have heard of MRSA (Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) which is often in the news and for which you will also be offered screening. MSSA stands for Meticillin Sensitive Staphylococcus Aureus. This bacteria (germ) is carried in the nostrils of around 20% (1 in 5) of the population quite normally. For the majority of people this causes no problems however, when the skin is cut for example during an operation the bacteria can enter the wound and cause an infection.

## What are the benefits of screening for MSSA?

We screen patients for MSSA before their surgery and eliminate the bacteria from the patient's nose and skin. This reduces the number of post-operative infections dramatically.

## How will I know if I have MSSA?

When you attend the pre-assessment clinic we will take a swab from your nose and groin to send to the laboratory to be examined. The laboratory will look for both MRSA and MSSA on these swabs. The results are usually available in three to four days. If your results are positive for MSSA you will receive a letter through the post indicating this. If you do not receive a letter your screen was negative for MSSA.

## How will MSSA affect me?

There are no risks to you. Having MSSA will not affect the timing of your surgery or where you are nursed in the hospital. It is a normal bacteria and you should not worry about passing it on to other people as they are likely to already have it.

You will have no restrictions on visitors and will not be nursed in a side-room (isolated) based on the result of your MSSA test.

## **What happens next?**

All patients at pre-assessment, will be given a bottle of antimicrobial body and hair wash to take home with them. You will start using this three days before your operation following the instructions provided with the bottle.

If you test positive for MSSA you will receive a letter confirming this. This will be delivered by registered or first class post and along with the letter will be a tube of nasal ointment which you will need to use before your surgery. The letter will contain full instructions of how to do this and contact numbers if you are unsure of what to do. You must start to use the nasal ointment at the same time that you start using the body and hair wash.

If your surgery date is within the next seven working days of attending your pre-assessment appointment, you will be given the antimicrobial body wash and nasal ointment at this appointment, staff will instruct you when to start using both.

## **How is MSSA spread in the hospital?**

MSSA can be transferred from patient to patient by touch. This is the most common way it is spread. It is therefore important that both staff and visitors either use hand gel or wash their hands before and after they attend to you.

## **Contacts**

If you require any further information or need to speak to someone please contact the surgical helpline on

**01670 529431**

Monday - Friday 08.30am - 3.30pm

## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 07815 500015

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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