

**Patient information: Infection Prevention and Control Department**

# MRSA screening information

**This leaflet provides you with information on the screening process for MRSA.**

## **What is MRSA?**

MRSA stands for Meticillin–Resistant Staphylococcus aureus. It is a bacteria that can live harmlessly on human skin, in nasal passages, or in the mouth.

## **Why is it important?**

The MRSA bacteria does not normally affect healthy people. The majority of people who carry it will have no signs or symptoms and are not aware they are carrying it. This is referred to as colonisation, but when a person goes in to hospital carrying MRSA and has a procedure that involves breaking the skin, the MRSA can get into the body and may cause an infection.

MRSA is a type of bacteria that has become resistant to group of antibiotics called Meticillin; however, there are still some antibiotics that can be used to treat MRSA.

## **What are we doing to prevent MRSA infection?**

If you are having a surgical procedure and have been identified at an increased risk from MRSA, you will be screened for MRSA.

Screening is done to check whether you are carrying MRSA. This will help reduce the risk of you developing an MRSA infection following a procedure and prevent the MRSA from spreading to other patients.

## **Screening Process**

A swab will be taken from your nose and any wounds that you might have. This will involve a cotton bud swab being placed in and around your nose and any wounds. The test will not hurt but may feel a little uncomfortable. The swab(s) will then be sent to the laboratory for testing.

## **When will you find out the result?**

The results usually take a few days. If

the result is negative, you will not hear from the staff as no further preparation needs to be undertaken before your procedure.

If the swab result finds MRSA present, our staff will contact you and let you know what to do.

### **What if I have MRSA?**

Try not to worry, as having MRSA should not interfere with your normal lifestyle.

Our staff will give you information on how you can help to reduce any risks of infection. You will be given a body wash and an ointment for your nose, both to be used for five days prior to your procedure.

You might be asked to come back to hospital to pick up this treatment or your GP might be contacted and asked to prescribe it for you.

### **Will this affect my eye surgery?**

No, you will be treated as planned. Your consultant will be informed of your MRSA result and of any precautionary measures that need to be taken.

Author: Amita Sharma, infection control department  
Revision number: 5  
Approval date: 2023  
Review date: 2026

**Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS  
Foundation Trust**  
**City Road, London EC1V 2PD**  
**Phone: 020 7253 3411**

### **Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)**

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: [pals@moorfields.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@moorfields.nhs.uk)  
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

### **Your right to treatment within 18 weeks**

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit [www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs)

**[www.moorfields.nhs.uk](http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk)**

### **Moorfields Direct telephone helpline**

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday–Friday, 8.30am–9pm

Saturday, 9am–5pm

Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

