



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

MRSA decolonisation

Information for patients



Read this information leaflet and follow the directions. This information leaflet should be read alongside the patient information leaflets in the products that you are provided.

What is MRSA?

The full name of MRSA is methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. You might have heard it called a “superbug”.

MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to several widely used antibiotics. This means infections with MRSA can be harder to treat than other bacterial infections.

MRSA infections mainly affect people who are staying in hospital. They can be serious, but can usually be treated with antibiotics that work against MRSA.

MRSA screening

MRSA screening is a simple and painless process to check if you have MRSA on your skin or in your nostrils. The process of MRSA screening should be discussed with you by your nurse or medical staff.

What is MRSA decolonisation?

MRSA decolonisation is to reduce the amount of MRSA on your skin and nostrils. It is not always possible to completely remove MRSA from your skin using decolonisation therapy.

If screening finds MRSA on your skin and nostrils you may need treatment to remove it, because MRSA could cause an infection if it gets deeper into the skin.

This usually involves:

- applying antibacterial ointment or cream inside your nose for 5 or 10 days.
- washing with a skin cleanser for 5 days with a hair wash on at least 2 of those days.
- changing your towel, clothes and bedding every day during treatment – the laundry should be washed separately from other people's and at a high temperature.

Consent

The staff will ask for your consent or permission to give you the medication needed for MRSA decolonisation. Staff will explain the risks, benefits, and alternatives, if there are any, before they ask for your consent. Remember that it is your choice whether you give your consent or not. If you have any doubts or would like more information before you make a decision, please ask the staff for more information. The staff will do everything we can to help you.

What MRSA decolonisation medications have I been given today?

MRSA decolonisation usually involves a nasal product and a skin cleanser, but some people will only have a skin cleanser. If you are only being supplied a skin cleanser this will be discussed with you.

What are the nasal products that I may receive?

You may be given either Bactroban® nasal ointment or Naseptin® nasal cream. The use of the nasal product will be discussed with you by your nurse or doctor.

How do I use the nasal product?

Both Bactroban® nasal ointment and Naseptin® nasal cream should be applied in the same way:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Place a small amount of the ointment or cream, about the size of a matchhead, on the tip of your little finger and carefully apply inside one nostril. Then repeat for the other nostril.
- If the nasal ointment or cream is being applied by your carer, they should use a cotton bud instead of their finger.
- Press both sides of your nose together to spread the ointment or cream around both nostrils.

Bactroban® should be used **THREE** times a day for 5 days. You should NOT have this nasal ointment if you or your carer has an allergy to mupirocin or other ingredients in the product.

Naseptin® should be used **FOUR** times a day for 10 days. You should NOT have this nasal cream if you or your carer has an allergy to chlorhexidine, neomycin, peanuts, soya, or other ingredients in the product.

What are the skin cleansers that I may receive?

You may be given either chlorhexidine skin cleanser or Octenisan® wash lotion. Most people will use chlorhexidine skin cleanser. If you are allergic to chlorhexidine, peanuts or soya then you will be given Octenisan® wash lotion.

The total length of use of the cleanser will be a maximum of 5 days.

How do I use the chlorhexidine skin cleanser or Octenisan® wash lotion?

Use instead of your normal soap and shampoo to wash your skin and hair. The skin cleanser is for use on the outside of your body only. Do not use it in any body cavities (e.g. nose, ears).

For body wash (once a day for 5 days):

- Ensure body is totally wet.
- Pour enough skin cleanser onto a clean damp wash cloth to cover the body. For adults this is usually 2 tablespoons (approximately 25ml of chlorhexidine skin cleanser and 30ml of Octenisan®).
- Then apply directly to the areas of skin that are to be washed. Begin with the face and working downwards, wash all over the body paying particular attention to the following;
 - areas around the nose
 - armpits
 - bellybutton
 - groin and genitals
 - perineum (the area between your anus and vagina or scrotum)

Do not use the skin cleanser on any cuts or areas of broken skin.

- Leave skin cleanser in contact with your skin for **at least 60 seconds**. Then rinse skin cleanser off with plenty of water
- Dry with a clean freshly laundered and dry towel.
- Change to clean clothing and bed linen after EACH wash with the skin cleanser.
- Patients confined to bed can be washed with the skin cleanser using a standard bed-bath technique.

If the product comes into contact with the eyes, wash out straight away with plenty of water.

If a skin irritation occurs, rinse off any remaining product straight away with plenty of water. Do not use any of the products again. Tell your nurse of the problem.

For hair wash days (minimum two of the 5 days):

Wash body with skin cleanser as above then wash again, this time including the hair:

- Hair conditioner can be used, but to make sure the skin cleanser works properly you should use the conditioner before the skin cleanser and rinse the conditioner off thoroughly with water.
- Leave in contact with your skin and hair for at least 60 seconds. Then rinse skin cleanser off with plenty of water.
- Dry with a clean freshly laundered and dry towel.
- Change to clean clothing and bed linen after EACH wash with the skin cleanser.
- Patients confined to bed can be washed with the skin cleanser using a standard bed-bath technique.

If the product comes into contact with the eyes, wash out straight away with plenty of water.

If a skin irritation occurs, rinse/wash off any remaining product straight away with plenty of water. Do not use any of the products again. Tell your nurse of the problem.

Avoid getting chlorhexidine skin cleanser onto your clothes or other fabrics, as it may damage them. If this happens, wash the clothes normally. Do not use bleach to remove the skin cleanser, as this will cause brown stains to develop.

What are the side effects of the medications that I have been given?

A full list of side effects is provided within the patient information leaflets provided by the manufacturers.

A common sign of an allergic reaction is a skin rash. More serious allergic reactions include swelling of the face, tongue or difficulty breathing. This is called an anaphylactic reaction and it can be serious or even life threatening.

Stop using the products if you think that you are having an allergic reaction. If you have difficulty breathing, feel dizzy or collapse:

If you are a patient IN the hospital –

ask your nurse for help.

If you are NOT in the hospital –

you or someone you are with should call 999 immediately

Always tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have had an allergic reaction to any medications before you receive any medication. If you have stopped using the decolonisation products due to side effects or allergic reaction tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

How do I store the products that I have been given?

Store at room temperature (below 30°C).

Keep it in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it.

Further information

For general enquiries contact your pre-assessment clinic.

If you have any further questions about your medications, please ring the **Patient Medicines Helpline**:

Tel: **01865 228 906**

This service is available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

The helpline will not be able to answer questions about your surgery or procedure.

Out of working hours contact your GP or 111

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Authors: Consultant Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist
Infection Prevention and Control Nurse
Specialist Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist

Date written: June 2021

Review: December 2024

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

