

Infection control at Barts and The London hospitals

We take infection control of all kinds very seriously. We have robust policies in place to reduce the risks of patients contracting infections while they are in one of our hospitals. For more information about how we protect patients against infections, please visit our website:
www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk/forpatients/protecting_against_infection.asp

Useful external contacts

Health Protection Agency
www.hpa.org.uk

NHS Direct 0845 46 47 48
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Barts and The London NHS Trust
Switchboard: 020 7377 7000
www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk

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Information

MRSA and your baby

Information for patients and visitors



What is MRSA?

MRSA is short for Methicillin or Meticillin (M) Resistant (R) Staphylococcus (S) Aureus (A).

Staphylococcus aureus (pronounced stafilococcus orius) is a common bacterium which is found on the skin and in the nose of about a third of the healthy population. In many people, it lives there harmlessly, but sometimes it can cause infections.

Methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of staphylococcus aureus that has become resistant to methicillin and many other antibiotics.

MRSA can spread from patient to patient in hospital which is why we test for its presence (screening).

How do you know that my baby has MRSA?

Babies are routinely screened to detect if MRSA is present. This is done by taking a swab from the inside of your baby's nose and sometimes from their umbilicus (tummy button). Screening helps us to control the spread of MRSA.

What treatment will be required?

The treatment needed will depend on whether your baby is colonised (more commonly) or infected with MRSA.

Colonisation

Colonisation means that the MRSA is carried in the nose and on the skin but is causing no harm and producing no symptoms. If your baby is found to be colonised with MRSA, no treatment is required.

Infection with MRSA

If your baby has a temperature and/or redness of a wound, this may indicate an infection. The cause of these symptoms will be investigated and if your baby is found to have an infection due to MRSA, the doctors will decide which antibiotics to give. These will be given through an intravenous infusion (drip) into a vein.

How else might this affect the care of my baby?

Whether your baby is colonised or infected with MRSA, all staff caring for your baby will wear gloves. This is to help prevent the spread of MRSA to other babies on the unit. On removal of their gloves, all staff will decontaminate their hands.

Do I need to take special precautions?

Ensure that you clean your hands with alcohol hand rub/gel or soap and water before and after caring for your baby.

Do I need to take any special precautions once my baby is at home?

Once your baby is back at home, washing your hands with soap and water is the best thing to do. MRSA is unlikely to harm healthy people outside hospital, including babies and pregnant women.

Do I need to tell anyone?

If your baby needs to come back into hospital, please tell the nurses and doctors caring for him or her that the baby previously had MRSA.

Queries and concerns

Please discuss any concerns with the nursing/medical staff on your ward or contact the Infection Control Team at Barts and The London hospitals via switchboard on 020 7377 7000 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, or by email to: _infectioncontrolnurses@bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk