

# Cardiology Pre-Admission MRSA & MSSA Screening Patient Information Leaflet

## Infection control department

### Our commitment to reducing infection

Taunton & Somerset NHS Foundation Trust takes all healthcare associated infections extremely seriously. We are committed to reducing infections in our hospital and giving our patients high quality healthcare.

### What are MRSA & MSSA?

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a type of bacteria which is carried by approximately 30% of the population either in their noses or on their skin. There are two main types; MSSA which is short for Methicillin Sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus*, and MRSA which is short for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. MSSA is responsive to many antibiotics but MRSA has developed resistance to some antibiotics.

Most people who have MRSA or MSSA are colonised, which means that the bacteria is present in the nose and on the skin, but doing no harm to the person.

Occasionally MRSA or MSSA can cause an infection. This may be a mild infection, such as a red, inflamed wound but may be more serious, such as septicaemia (infection of the blood). If a patient has an infection caused by either MRSA or MSSA it can be treated with antibiotics.

### Why do we screen for MRSA & MSSA?

People can carry MRSA or MSSA without any symptoms. Screening you before your admission will enable us to identify if you are carrying the bacteria and provide you with treatment. This helps reduce your risk of developing an infection at the site of your surgery (surgical wound infection).

All cardiology patients undergoing a pacing procedure will be screened for MRSA and MSSA.

### How is the screen done?

Swabs are taken from various areas on your body. You will have a swab of your nose and may also have swabs taken from your groin, any wounds and your catheter if you have one.

### Will I be told the results?

The swabs are sent to the laboratory to test if MRSA or MSSA are present. If the swab does not show the presence of either bacteria then you will not hear from .

### What happens if we find MSSA or MRSA / how is it treated?

If you are found to be carrying MRSA or MSSA do not worry. You are unlikely to suffer any harm or pass it on to anyone else. The treatment is simple and consists of a body wash and a nasal ointment. The body wash will be provided at the pre-operative assessment clinic. Your General Practitioner (GP) will be informed and will organise a prescription for the nasal

ointment, for you to collect from your surgery. The hospital will advise you that you need to be treated and when it needs to start.

### **How does it spread?**

The most common way for MRSA and MSSA to be spread is on hands. The single most important way of preventing spread of these bacteria is by hand washing with soap and water or using alcohol gel.

### **Are my family and friends at risk?**

MRSA & MSSA do not harm healthy people including pregnant women and children. If you are worried that any of your friends and family have long term health problems that might make them vulnerable to infections please speak to your GP.

### **What to do in case of difficulty?**

If you have general enquiries about MRSA or MSSA please talk to your GP or alternatively contact Musgrove Infection Control Team on the number below:

Musgrove Park Hospital: 01823 342611

Further information is also available from the Health Protection Agency at: [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)