

INFORMATION ON MRSA SCREENING FOR ELECTIVE CAESAREAN SECTION AND DIABETIC/GESTATIONAL DIABETIC PATIENTS

INFORMATION

Harrogate and District NHSF Trust is proud of its low rates of MRSA (methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) and we work hard to maintain high standards of cleanliness and infection control. This leaflet is designed to give you information about screening for MRSA.

The Trust is offering MRSA screening to maternity patients in line with the Department of Health policy to screen all planned admissions. If you have any questions or problems that are not answered by the information here please ask your doctor or midwife.

INTRODUCTION

Staphylococcus Aureus (SA) is a bacterium that normally lives on the skin, particularly the nose, skin folds, hair line and perineum of approximately 30-60% of the population.

It commonly survives in these areas without causing infection, a state known as colonisation. Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is resistant to the more commonly used antibiotics. This means that it is harder to treat when it causes an infection.

WHY SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR MRSA?

People can become carriers of MRSA in the same way that they become a carrier of any other bacteria, and MRSA is not just found in hospital it can also be found in the community. This means that MRSA can be brought into hospital by patients and visitors.

This screening will identify any patients who have been colonised with MRSA in the community prior to their admission.

WHEN SHOULD I BE SCREENED?

Women who have been given a date for an Elective Lower Segment Caesarean Section (ELSCS) can be screened up to 16 weeks before their ELSCS date, as well as any women who are a diabetic or a gestational diabetic. These women can be screened at any time after 28 weeks of pregnancy.

WHAT DOES SCREENING INVOLVE?

The doctors/ midwives in antenatal clinic will discuss MRSA with you and you will be offered screening at a suitable time. Verbal consent will be obtained and documented in your notes. A swab moistened in saline will be taken from your nose and any open wounds or urinary catheter sites.

HOW WILL I GET MY RESULTS?

- **NEGATIVE RESULTS**

If the result is NEGATIVE you will be sent a letter or you may be notified of the result when you next attend the antenatal clinic.

- **POSITIVE RESULTS**

If you are found to be a carrier of MRSA you will be contacted by the antenatal clinic staff. A positive result means that you have been colonised (carrying the bacteria). It does not mean that you have an infection. Following a discussion in antenatal clinic you will be offered treatment.

The treatment consists of a nasal cream and an antiseptic body wash (to include 2 hair washes) which should be continued for 5 days. This treatment will be given to start 5 days before your planned induction of labour or your caesarean section date. This is to prevent you developing an infection and it should not cause any problems if you wish to breast feed your baby.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO INTO LABOUR BEFORE MY CAESAREAN SECTION DATE OR INDUCTION DATE AND I HAVE A POSITIVE RESULT?

If this should happen you may need to be treated with antibiotics during labour or afterwards. This will be a clinical decision and you will be observed for signs of infection during your stay in hospital and nursed in a single room.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECLINE SCREENING FOR MRSA?

If you decline to have a swab taken for MRSA you will be offered treatment with the nasal cream and an antiseptic body wash. Should you decide not to have treatment, it will be necessary to nurse you in a single room and isolate you from the other women during your hospital stay.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE TO BE INDUCED OR HAVE A CAESAREAN SECTION QUICKLY AND THERE IS NO TIME TO TAKE SWABS?

MRSA swabs take 72 hours to process. If you need to have an elective caesarean section or be induced before this, you will be offered treatment with a nasal cream and an antiseptic body wash to commence immediately. If the swabs on processing are found to be negative you can then discontinue the treatment. If this is not possible due to the quickness of surgery i.e. Emergency Caesarean Section (EMLSCS), nasal swabs will be taken at time of surgery and treatment commenced if a positive result is obtained. The 5 day course of treatment should be completed by women with a positive swab result.

The purpose of screening is to identify “silent” carriers of MRSA and to deal with it to minimise the chance of an infection occurring in you or your baby at the time of delivery.

CONTACT NUMBERS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Antenatal Clinic - 01423 553010
Community Midwifery - 01423 553051

References

MRSA Screening, Department of Health. Gateway ref number 1123. Dec 2008

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.