



MRSA Decolonization

Information for Patients Discharged Home

This information is intended to assist patients who have been discharged home with a MRSA decolonization regimen

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a type of germ (bacteria) that lives on the skin and in the nose of healthy people. Sometimes this bacteria can cause an infection. Most Staphylococcus aureus infections can be treated with commonly used antibiotics. However, methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) does not respond to treatment with certain types of antibiotics therefore, making infections with these germs difficult to treat.

What is MRSA colonization?

Colonization is a term that describes when a germ is present in or on your body but it does not cause an illness or infection. Many people can be colonized with MRSA. The most common places for colonization are your armpits, nostrils, skin, throat and urine. This colonization can act as a reservoir which means that MRSA infections can later develop in your body or spread to other people. If you are found to be a carrier of MRSA then you may be offered treatment using a “decolonization regimen” which can prevent future infections or the spread of MRSA to others.

What is Decolonization?

People who are colonized with MRSA can have treatment to help remove the bacteria from their skin and nose. The treatment is an antibiotic ointment which is put into the inner nostrils. You will also be asked to wash with a special soap called chlorhexidine. This treatment will take 7 days. You should know that this treatment does not work for everyone. Some people who have been successful with this treatment still may re-colonize at a later time.

If you have agreed to the decolonization treatment, it is very important that you complete the 7 days of treatment for in order to achieve MRSA decolonization. Follow up testing (swab of nose) to see if treatment was effective can be completed 10 days after treatment has finished. A letter will be sent to your family doctor to inform them of your treatment.

(over...)

INFORMATION	DATE
MRSA colonization detected on:	
Decolonization/treatment was started on:	
Decolonization/treatment should finish on:	
Repeat testing for MRSA suggested on:	

How to complete decolonization treatment:

After washing your hands with soap and water, apply mupirocin ointment to both nostrils using a clean cotton swab (Q-tip) 3 times a day (morning, noon & night). Use a new cotton swab (Q-tip) for each application. It is important to use ointment for the 7 days as prescribed and discard any unused ointment when treatment is complete.

Wash with chlorhexidine 2% solution once a day for a total of 7 days. Use the solution as a body wash in the shower for all areas below your neck, avoiding your face and eyes. Rinse the solution off well. Use a clean towel and washcloth each time.

Notes: