



Being MRSA positive in the hospital and at home

Introduction

Lab tests have shown that MRSA bacteria are present in your culture sample. This means that you are a carrier of this bacterium because you may have been in contact with Methicilline-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). In order to prevent further transmission extra hygiene measures will be implemented during your hospital stay. This leaflet explains what this means for you.

1. Being MRSA positive

In certain circumstances you can become an MRSA 'carrier' without having any symptoms. The bacteria are often found in the nose. MRSA bacteria do not cause healthy people with a normal resistance to become ill. Patients who have a (greatly) lowered resistance are at greater risk of becoming infected. Infections caused by MRSA are more difficult to treat because the bacteria are no longer affected by the most common antibiotics prescribed in the Netherlands. Extra hygiene measures during your stay on the ward:

Strict isolation

In order to prevent MRSA being transmitted to other patients and personnel in the hospital, you will be nursed in strict isolation. You will be nursed in a single room with an entrance area. Hospital staff change their clothing in the entrance area and wear a face mask, cap, apron and gloves on entering your room. You must always first consult with the ward nurse and the hospital hygienist before you may leave the room. The door will be kept closed as much as possible. If you need to leave the room for tests or treatment you must wear a face mask yourself, which will be provided by the nursing staff.

Tests/Operation

Your tests/operation will preferably be planned towards the end of the day because extra hygiene measures must be implemented.

Visitors/family members

Visitors are limited and must wear a face mask, apron and gloves during the isolation period. It is important that they disinfect their hands after leaving the room. If the visitors are going to visit other people in the hospital, we request that they first conduct these visits and visit you last. If any of your family members is admitted to the hospital or has lowered resistance, you must inform the attending doctor. In some individual cases visitors and/or family members may be checked for the presence of MRSA bacteria. This check-up takes place in consultation with the hospital hygienist.

Laundry

You can have your laundry taken home wrapped up in a plastic bag. Your laundry must be washed in the washing machine on the hottest possible setting and separately from any other laundry.

MRSA treatment

In order to clear the MRSA your nose will be treated with a cream that is applied to the front of the nose three times a day for five days. To support this treatment you are required to wash yourself with an antiseptic soap during these days. After washing you may treat your skin with a skin lotion to prevent dry skin. After the treatment MRSA culture swabs will be taken from you. Most patients are MRSA-free after this treatment.

2. Discharge

The attending doctor may discharge you even though you are MRSA-infected. If your MRSA treatment has not yet finished, it will be continued at home. Before being discharged you will receive instructions from the ward nurse and/or hospital hygienist. Once you are back at home, there are no restrictions on what you can do.

3. Home situation

The fact that you are perhaps not yet MRSA-free does not pose a risk to people living in your house, because they are (usually) not ill. Practical experience shows that should any of the people living in your house become infected they quickly become MRSA-free without any treatment. If you require care at home, while you are MRS-positive, home care workers will wear protective clothing such as an apron, gloves and a face mask to prevent MRSA transmission to other patients.

4. Visit to outpatients' clinic

After being discharged you may need to visit the outpatients' clinic for a check-up. If you are still an MRSA-bacteria carrier, your appointment will be planned towards the end of the day. MRSA control swabs will be taken and the doctor and/or outpatients' clinic assistant will implement extra hygiene measures, such as wearing an apron, cap, face mask and gloves.

5. MRSA flags

If you are found to be MRSA-positive, your details will be entered on to a flagging system. This means that when a receptionist enters your name on the computer a notification will appear to contact the hospital hygienist. Depending on your situation control swabs will be taken and/or extra isolation measures implemented. If you are MRSA-free after one year of several MRSA control swabs, your details will be removed from the flagging system.

6. Contact

We realise that the situation and measures may be disruptive and unpleasant for you. However, this is the only way we can provide the proper treatment for you and protect other patients from MRSA infections. We will make every effort to make your stay at azM as pleasant as possible, including during the isolation period. If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please contact the attending doctor. You can also contact Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention staff members on telephone number 043-387 71 35.

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