

# How to use your methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) screen postal kit (Sunrise version)

**Pre-operative Assessment**  
Patient Information Leaflet

## Introduction

This information leaflet is for people who need screening for MRSA before they come into hospital for an operation or other procedure.

Please read all the instructions carefully before taking your swabs. If you have difficulty taking the swabs yourself, ask someone to help you.

## Why do I need to have an MRSA swab?

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that is resistant to several antibiotics, which means it is harder to treat than other bacterial infections. MRSA lives harmlessly on the skin of around one in 30 people, usually in the nose, armpits or groin, without causing any symptoms. This is known as “colonisation” or “carrying” MRSA, and it is nothing to be alarmed about. Getting MRSA on your skin will not make you ill, but it could cause an infection if it gets deeper within your body. People coming into hospital are more at risk of this happening because:

- They often have a way for bacteria to get into their body, e.g. a wound, a drip in a vein or a urinary catheter.
- They may have other serious health problems that mean their body is less able to fight an infection.

Healthy people are not usually at risk of MRSA infections.

It is important to know whether you are carrying MRSA so that we can reduce your risk of getting an infection or spreading the bacteria to others. If your MRSA swabs are positive for the germ, you will require topical treatment (please see page 8). This will reduce the number of MRSA bacteria before your operation or procedure and will help to reduce complications related to a possible MRSA infection whilst you are recovering. This treatment is painless and usually well tolerated.

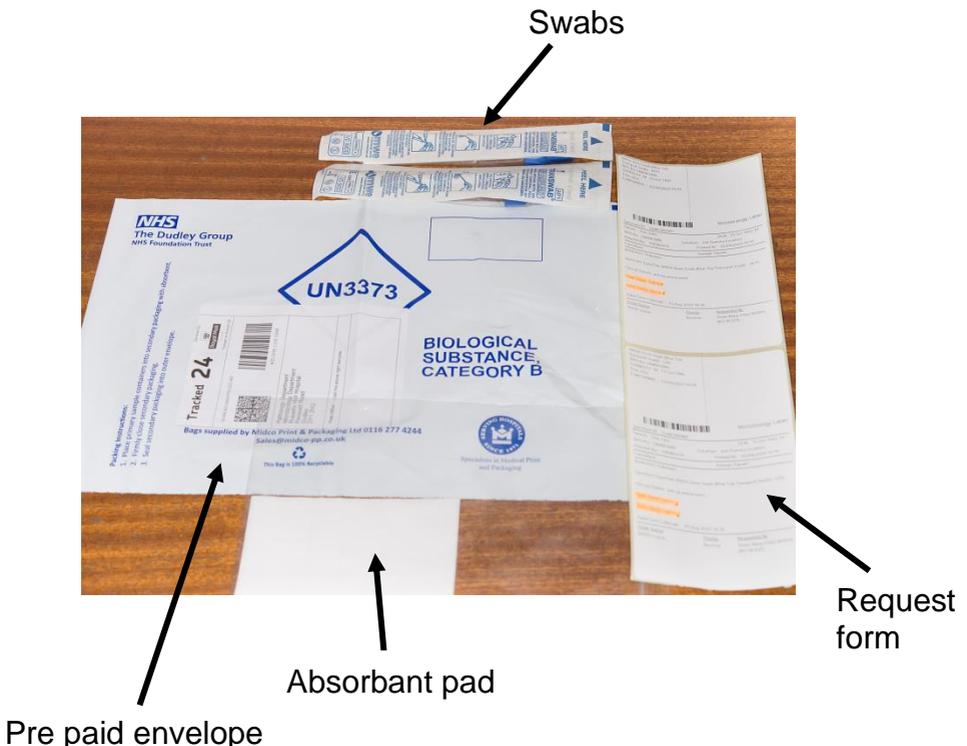
## Why do I need to screen myself at home?

You have been asked to complete your own MRSA screen so that you do not have to make another visit to the hospital.

## What equipment should I be given?

You will have been provided with a screening pack which contains the following items:

- Two separately wrapped swab packs containing a blue-tipped swab stick and white-capped plastic tube.
- Two printed microbiology test labels (marked 'nose' and 'groin'). This contains your personal details.
- Patient stickers (marked 'nose' and 'groin') with your personal details to label the swab containers.
- A plastic bag to put your completed swabs in.
- A pre-paid bag to return your samples.



# How to complete your MRSA swabs

Please make sure you have a clean, dry surface for your swabs and equipment.

## Nose swabs:

1. Begin by washing your hands thoroughly.
2. Carefully peel down the outer packaging of the swab and remove the plastic tube inside.



3. Attach the small patient small sticker marked 'nose' to the plastic tube.



4. Break the seal on the tube by twisting the cap and removing it.



- Carefully remove the cotton swab from the packet using the blue handle. Please note: when removing the swab, it is important that you **do not** touch the length of the swab or the cotton wool tip. **You must only use the blue handle.**



- Gently swirl the swab around the inside of one nostril five to six times using a rotating action. Using the same swab, repeat this inside the other nostril.
- Place the swab inside the tube, making sure not to touch the length or end of the swab.
- Firmly push the swab in place until the blue cap reaches the line marked on the tube.

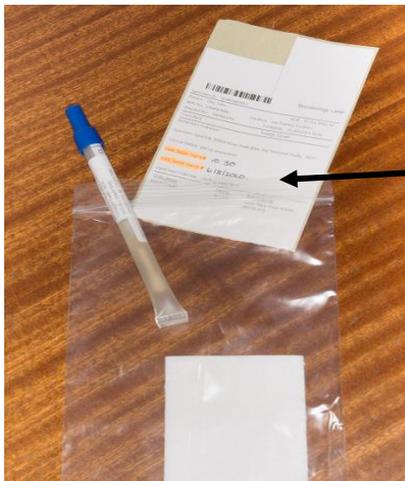
### Groin swabs:

- Make sure your hands are clean.
- Repeat the process described above, this time attaching the small patient sticker marked '**groin**' to the second tube.
- Carefully remove the cotton swab from the packet using the blue handle. Please note: when removing the swab, it is important that you **do not** touch the length of the swab or the cotton wool tip. **You must only use the blue handle.**
- Holding the blue handle, gently rub the swab against both sides of your groin (the folds of skin on the inside of the top of your thighs), ensuring the swab does not touch your clothing. As before, use one swab for **both sides** of your groin

5. Place the swab inside the tube, making sure not to touch the length or end of the swab.
6. Firmly push the swab in place until the blue cap reaches the line marked on the tube.

### To complete the process:

1. Please complete the **date and time** you took your swab on the request form.
2. Make sure the small label on the top left hand corner of the request form is placed around the tube.
3. Next, place the tube containing the swabs from your **nose** into the plastic bag provided.
4. Repeat this again with the tube for the groin swab, making sure the small label stating '**groin**' is used. This is found on the top left hand corner of the request form.
5. Place the **groin** swab into the plastic bag with the **nose** swab, again making sure the bag is firmly sealed.
6. Wash your hands when you have finished.



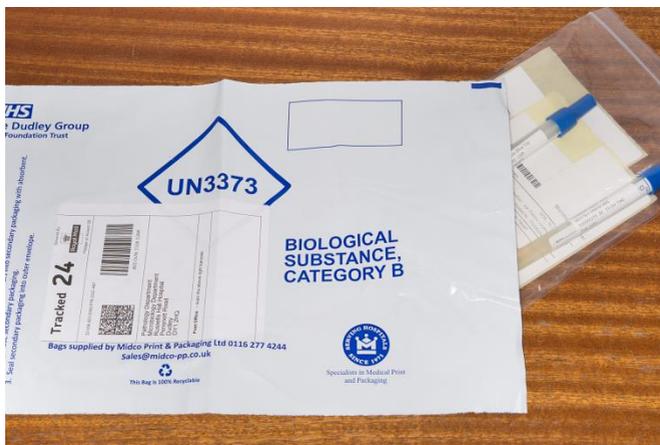
**Please ensure you complete the date and time highlighted.**

## What do I do with my swabs now?

You have been provided with a pre-paid postal bag for you to return your samples. Place the samples inside the postal bag along with the request form and carefully seal.

So that we can process your swab results quickly and effectively, you will need to return your completed swabs in the post on **the same day they were taken**. Any delay in completing and returning your swabs could result in a delay in your procedure.

Please return your swabs between **Monday and Thursday before the last post**. Do not collect or send your samples on Fridays, as we will be unable to process them over the weekend – this is important as your sample may be rejected.



## When will I hear about the results of my swabs?

We will not contact you if your MRSA swab is negative as no further action is required. If your swab is positive, one of our staff members will contact you. We will also inform your GP, who will then contact you to organise your treatment.

## What treatment will I need if I am MRSA positive?

You will need antiseptic treatment for MRSA to help prevent wound infections by removing MRSA from your skin (known as “decolonisation”). This usually involves:

- Applying antibacterial cream inside your nose three times a day for five days.
- Washing with an antibacterial wash/shampoo every day for five days.
- Changing your towel, clothes and bedding every day during treatment.

If your MRSA swab result finds that you are carrying MRSA, you will be contacted and advised about your treatment.

## Further information

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111 ext. 3166

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://www.dgft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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