

How to Prepare for Surgery if You Carry MSSA or MRSA

What is MSSA and MRSA?

MSSA is the short name for methicillin sensitive staphylococcus aureus. MRSA is the short name for methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus. These germs live on the skin and in the nose of some people. All humans carry bacteria on their skin, in the nose, and inside the digestive tract. In most cases, they do not harm us and are often very helpful. But if bacteria gets into a part of our body where they don't belong, they can cause problems and lead to infections. In the case of MRSA, these infections are hard to treat because there are few medicine choices.

MRSA and Contact Isolation Precautions

If you are found to carry MRSA, special safety measures will need to be followed. This prevents the spread of MRSA to other patients. These safety measures are called **contact isolation precautions**. UW Health requires you to be in contact isolation every time you are a patient in a UW Health hospital or clinic. To prevent the spread of MRSA, your visitors and health care team will follow directions outlined in a sign placed on your door.

Health care workers and visitors will need to have clean hands, wear gloves and a gown when going into your room. They will put used gloves in trash and gowns in a hamper. Then, they will clean hands again before leaving your room.

Talk with your nurse about what you need to do to prevent the spread of germs.

- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing. If you use a tissue or your hands, clean your hands when you are done.

- Clean your hands before leaving your room.
- Put on a clean robe (may use a second gown worn like a robe) before leaving your room. Keep the robe on while outside your room.
- Stay in your room except when you need to go for a test or procedure.
- Avoid contact with other patients.

Having MRSA in your nose or on your skin should not be a problem in your daily life. The best way to prevent the spread of MRSA at home and in public is to wash your hands often. Don't share towels and clothes.

What can be done to prevent an infection at my surgical site if I am found to carry MSSA or MRSA?

There are many options that can help prevent an infection after surgery. You may be asked to follow one or all the steps listed.

1. Apply an antibiotic ointment to your nose twice per day for the 5 days before your surgery.
2. Wash with CHG (Hibiclens®) soap daily for the 5 days before your surgery. The **day before** surgery, wash with CHG soap in the evening and again the **morning** of your surgery.
3. Staff may apply a medicine in your nose right before your surgery. This medicine may leave a brown stain inside your nose. This should go away when you blow your nose after surgery.
4. If you are found to carry MRSA, an antibiotic will be given to you before your surgery that works against MRSA.

Preparing Your Skin Before Surgery

Follow these steps **daily** for 5 days prior to surgery. Contact your doctor if you have questions.

Skin Treatment

1. Shower or bathe using your normal soap and shampoo, then rinse off. **Do not shave.**
2. Turn off or step out of the water stream.
3. Apply CHG soap to a clean, wet washcloth. Wash your skin from neck to toes, making sure to cover all skin areas once. **Do not apply the soap on your face, head or genitals.** Please read the skin use of Hibiclens® at the bottom of the next column.
4. Leave CHG soap on your skin for 1 minute (sing happy birthday two times slowly). This helps it absorb into the skin.
5. Rinse your skin with warm water. Do not scrub. **Slight contact to the genital area during rinsing is fine.** Blot your skin dry with a clean towel.

Nasal Treatment

1. Apply Mupirocin two times daily after washing your face in the morning and night.

2. Apply Mupirocin to a clean cotton swab and insert 1-2 cm into each nostril. Rotate swabs against the inside of the nostril for 3 seconds. Apply pressure with a finger to the outside of the nose.
3. **Do not** use Mupirocin the morning of surgery.

The Night Before and Morning of Surgery

Shower using CHG soap the night before **and** morning of surgery.

Do not use lotions, creams, powder, perfume or makeup after your shower or bath. Wear clean pajamas and sleep on clean sheets.

Do not use Mupirocin the morning of surgery.

***Hibiclens® is for skin use only.** Do not use if you are allergic to chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG). Do not use on your head or face. Do not use on deep wounds. CHG may cause skin irritation such as itching or redness. This is more likely when it is applied to sensitive skin right after taking a shower or shaving. If itching or redness persists, rinse the area. Stop using the Hibiclens® and contact your surgeon's office.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #7221.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©2/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7218.