

# MRSASUPPORT

## 10 Point Checklist

### How to reduce your risk of catching MRSA and other Hospital Acquired Infections

1. Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer, advises that patients on wards should insist doctors and nurses clean their hands thoroughly before examinations and procedures. Medical staff should also avoid breathing at the site and neither should you breathe at your own open wounds, uncovered canulae or catheters as you or the clinician may be colonised in the nose and throat. Wearing a facemask is also advisable.
2. Insist that the patient's phone, table and locker are cleaned with antiseptic before use, also that any bathrooms are clean before use.
3. Do not allow your wounds or vulnerable sites to be attended to while dusting or cleaning is being done, or within one hour of it. Dust carries germs and should be allowed to settle before your wounds are uncovered.
4. Never allow your wounds to be left uncovered even for the briefest time. The longer they are exposed the greater the chance of infection getting in.
5. The most vulnerable areas of skin prone to bed sores and consequent infection are the buttocks, elbows and heels. At the slightest hint of soreness insist on the area being sanitised and treated as a matter of urgency, do not delay, this is a major entry point for infection.
6. Never put bare feet on the ward floor.
7. Do not allow visitors to sit on your bed.
8. Paper may harbour infection. Politely decline another patient's offer of the use of their reading matter; avoid offence by explaining why.
9. Ask your relatives to take laundry home in a secure plastic bag and wash separately in a very hot wash, well above 65°C, or with a disinfectant. This will help prevent the spread into the community. MRSA can live in fabric for approximately 60 days and withstand lower washing temperatures.
10. There are many proprietary antibacterial preparations which may well add to your safety and may prevent the spread of infection. Be aware, however, that use of these preparations may offer a modicum of protection but will not prevent you from contracting a hospital infection as, in order for them to be totally effective, it is necessary for everyone in the hospital to adhere to high hygiene standards. We advise that you wash with antibacterial soap and shampoo for at least three days before admission, making sure that the groin area, between the toes and any other folds of skin are thoroughly cleaned and dried. Take a supply of these soaps, and antiseptic wipes, into hospital with you. Use these until you are discharged, especially prior to surgery, as this may prevent you being a carrier and infecting yourself and others.