

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM

PATIENT INFO JANUARY 2008

SCREENING FOR MRSA AND VRE

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria (germs) over the past 10 years. Examples of resistant bacteria are “Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus” (MRSA) and “Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus” (VRE). MRSA and VRE have been found in most hospitals and more recently in some community groups.

Usually, people who carry one of these germs have no symptoms or problems. They are not making the person sick. MRSA often lives in the nose, on the skin or in stools. VRE lives in the lower bowel.

In hospitals, these germs can spread between patients and cause infections, especially in patients already sick with other diseases. If an infection occurs, fewer drugs can be used and the infection is more difficult to treat.

It is very important that we prevent and control the spread of these resistant germs to patients. In order to do so, The Ottawa Hospital is testing all patients admitted to the hospital. This testing allows us to find carriers quickly and prevent spread to other patients.

The nurse will take swabs of your nose and rectum and any broken areas of your skin. The results will be reported to your physician. If you are found to carry MRSA or VRE, you will be placed in a single room and put under special Infection Control precautions. This is to ensure that the germs cannot spread to other patients. Your medical care that you require will not be affected.

Your cooperation in having swabs collected is appreciated, and is necessary for us to make sure that we keep MRSA and VRE in control. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your nurse or your doctor.

Thank you
The Infection Prevention and Control Program