

Routines and certificate of MRSA-screening

The prevalence of the antibiotic-resistant bacteria Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) has increased in recent years. Therefore, all visiting healthcare professionals must be screened for MRSA before starting a clinical observership.

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of staph bacteria resistant to beta-lactam-antibiotics. The prevalence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria has increased in recent years. Many of the resistant bacterial species can be prevalent in a person's normal bacterial flora, however infection occurs when the body's defence is somehow disturbed.

MRSA is common in many countries, particularly in hospitals, but so far less common in Sweden. To prevent it from spreading, anyone who has been in contact with medical services in other countries, whether as a patient or as staff, or have visited regions where MRSA is common, must undergo MRSA-screening before participating in clinical work or studies.

MRSA screening

The screening upon arrival in Gothenburg must be done regardless of previous screening in the home country. Samples will be taken from the nose, throat, perineum and, if applicable, from skin lesions. It takes approximately 3-5 workdays to receive the test result. If you have a skin lesion, you are not allowed to have contact with patients until you test negative for MRSA.

What if MRSA is verified?

If a visiting healthcare professional tests positive for MRSA they are called to the Infectious Disease Clinic as soon as possible for examination, testing and information. The attending physician at the Infectious Disease Clinic will evaluate individual risk factors and the type of clinical work that will be done. Before the evaluation is completed the visitor will be prevented from entering clinical work according to regulations from the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen).

The return to clinical work will be done in consultation between the attending physician at the Infectious Disease Clinic, Vårdhygien and Infectious Disease Control in Region Västra Götaland (VGR). An individual plan is established by

the attending physician in the MRSA department at the Infectious Disease Clinic in collaboration with the department of Vårdhygien at Sahlgrenska University Hospital.

A person with confirmed MRSA must follow the stipulated rules given by the attending physician according to the Swedish Communicable Diseases Act (Smittskyddslagen). A person with confirmed MRSA must not perform clinical work in a clinical unit assessed as a "risk unit".

Attending physician should inform about the possibility for waiving stipulated rules and medical check-ups when MRSA is verified if the following criteria are met:

- At least three negative samples of MRSA are taken during a 12-month period (from the first to the third test) at a person with healthy skin and no other individual risk factors are present (Guidelines at National Board of Health and Welfare).
- The testing is free of charge for all students and staff.
- The following regulations are mandatory for all students and staff working in the healthcare sector in Sweden.