

Multi-resistant organisms: screening and clearance

Consumer information

What are multi-resistant organisms?

Multi-resistant organisms are germs that can cause infections that are hard to treat. They include bacteria that are resistant to common antibiotics.

You may be carrying some of these germs without knowing it. They may not cause you problems while you are well.

However, these germs might cause problems if you have an open wound or if the germs spread to another patient.

Therefore, it is important we know if you have any of these germs.

If we know, it may assist in your management if you develop an infection.

We can also stop the germs spreading to other patients.

The germs we look for vary, but can include:

- MRSA (methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)
- VRE (vancomycin resistant enterococci)
- CPE (carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales)

How do we check for germs?

How we check, or screen, for the germs depends on what germs we are looking for.

For some germs, we dab or roll a swab (a stick with a cotton wool tip) inside your nose, throat and in your groin (the crease between your inner thigh and upper body).

For some germs, we will need you to provide a small amount of poo in a container we give you, or we may need to dab a swab outside or inside your bottom.

We may check (screen) for germs if:

- you have recently been in hospital
- you live in a residential / long-term care facility (like an aged-care home)
- you are in a ward with patients who are at high risk of getting an infection, or you are at high risk of an infection
- you have been sharing a room or bathroom with someone who has a multi-resistant organism
- you have previously had one of these germs.

What happens if I have these germs?

If the screening shows you have a multi-resistant germ, your doctor or nurse will tell you.

We will be on the lookout for any sign of infection and will know how to treat an infection if it does occur.

To stop the germ spreading to other patients, you may be cared for in a single room and staff will wear gloves and gowns/aprons when they are in your room.

Your visitors may also be asked to wear gloves and a gown/apron and will be told to wash their hands carefully or use alcohol based hand rub when leaving your room. This is to protect them and others from the germ.

Will I always have this germ?

No not necessarily but this will depend on the germ and the individual circumstances.

If you come back into hospital you may be screened for the germ again.

The decision to re-screen you will be made by the hospital infection control team who will look at your past results, what antibiotics you've taken recently and other conditions that may affect the germ.

If the germ is not found following one or more screening samples, then you may be 'cleared' of the germ.

Further questions?

Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any more questions.



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This information has been reviewed by Tasmanian consumers.