

## **Patient Instructions and Rationale for Decolonization**

### **Why am I being screened for *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph)?**

*Staphylococcus aureus*, or “staph” is a bacterium that is commonly found in the nose and on the skin. Some staph bacteria may be easier to eliminate than others. Those staph bacteria that are hard to eliminate or kill are known as “resistant.” Resistant means that the bacteria will not be killed by most medications (antibiotics) used to treat the infections they cause. Healthcare workers may call this type of staph bacteria “MRSA.”

There are staph bacteria that are usually easy to eliminate. These bacteria are known as “susceptible.” Susceptible means that there are several effective treatments available when caring for the infections caused by these bacteria. Health care workers may call this kind of staph “MSSA.”

Since staph bacteria commonly live on the body and in the nose, most people may never know they may be carrying these bacteria on their body. Most times the only way a person knows they have staph is if they develop an infection. In most cases, staph bacteria only cause infection if there is a way for it to get under the skin.

Surgery can be an opportunity for staph bacteria to get under the skin and cause infection. If a patient has staph on their skin and in their nose, there is treatment designed to help reduce their chance of infection caused by skin bacteria at the surgical site.

### **How do I know if I have staph?**

During the pre-surgical visit, you will be screened for the presence of staph on your body. Since staph is very common in the nose, a swab of each nostril is all that is need to detect the bacteria. Results may not be available for a few days.

### **I am having surgery, and I have staph...now what?**

There are steps that you can follow so that your chances of infection at the surgical site are lowered. One of the best ways to decrease the risk of bacteria getting into your body is to eliminate as many bacteria as possible. The skin and nose are the most common places for staph bacteria to live in and on. The treatments are designed to remove staph from the skin and nose before surgery is performed. Health care workers refer to this process as “decolonization.”



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### **Pre-surgical instructions for patients**

Help us reduce your risk of infection. There are several steps you can do that have been shown to be effective at removing staph from the nose and skin. Removal of staph from your body requires bathing with a special soap called chlorhexidine or CHG. You will bathe the day before your surgery and again the morning of your surgery.

Shower with the chlorhexidine containing skin cleanser. Begin by washing your hair and face and neck with regular soap and shampoo. Turn off the water and wash the remainder of your body with the special soap, being careful to only wash below the neck. Pay special attention to your armpits and any skin folds. Do not scrub. Wash like you would normally do. Do not shave your legs or armpits and the apply CHG. This may cause a rash or irritation. The special soap should be applied with a sponge or net pouf or special gauze that was given to you. Wait five minutes and then rinse off. After drying, do not apply any lotions as they may neutralize the effect of the CHG. Remember to mark this off on your documentation form. If you were provided a chlorhexidine impregnated cloth instead of CHG soap, then you will follow the instructions for application after you have showered and dried off. Please note that your skin may feel tacky or sticky as the CHG from the cloths dry. This will pass once it is fully dry.

If you are told that your nasal screen is positive for *Staph aureus*, you will need to pick up a prescription for Bactroban (Mupirocin) 2 percent from your pharmacy. In addition to the bathing twice prior to surgery, you will also need to treat you nose. You will need to wash your hands with soap and water before starting. Open the single dose tube and apply half of the tube into one side of the nose, then the remainder into the other nostril. With your fingers, gently squeeze your nose together using a circular motion. This helps spread the ointment through the nose. Wash your hands with soap and water. Record this on your documentation form. Some physicians may prefer the use of an iodine based nasal antiseptic. You will be told which product will be used. If your provider chooses to use nasal iodine, this will be applied before your surgery begins. If you have an allergy to iodine, you should tell your provider.

**Notify your physician if irritation of the skin or nose develops while using the above regimen. This is a rare occurrence.**

### **Patient Record of Decolonization**

You have been screened for the presence of *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph) bacteria in your nose. These bacteria may live on your skin and in your nose without causing infection. The surgery you are being screened for will require an incision. Staph bacteria from the surface of your skin if allowed to enter the skin can cause serious infection. The surgical team will cleanse your skin with a disinfectant right before surgery to eliminate as much skin bacteria as possible,



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but we need your help too. You have been given instructions for both the cleaning of your skin as well as the treatment of any bacteria living in your nose if identified. You will need to cleanse your skin twice prior to surgery (the night before and the morning of). If your nose needs treatment, the nurse will tell/call you with the result of your screen and instruct you to pick up the ointment at the pharmacy and use it for five days prior to surgery as well. Remember, you only need to cleanse your skin unless instructed otherwise. Please see the detailed instructions for how to clean your skin and/or treat your nose.

- **Please fill out this form by placing an “X” in the appropriate box indicating you have completed the treatment for each day.**
- **Please bring this form with you to our facility on the day of your scheduled surgery.**
- **The person receiving you will ask for this form.**

|                         | <b>CHG Bath Treatment</b>   | <b>Morning Nose Treatment</b> | <b>Evening Nose Treatment</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Date Day 1:</b>      |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Date Day 2:</b>      |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Date Day 3:</b>      |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Date Day 4:</b>      |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Date Day 5:</b>      |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Date of Surgery:</b> | <i>Night before surgery</i> |                               |                               |
| <b>Day of Surgery:</b>  | <i>Morning of surgery</i>   |                               |                               |

**Surgery Date:**

**Date of Screening:**

**I was told I am positive for Staph: YES NO** (please circle)