

## Do parents need to take precautions?

When caring for your baby it is not necessary for you to wear gloves as you are not going to be handling other babies in the neonatal unit. **However, you should always wash your hands carefully with warm water and soap and use the hand-gel on entering the neonatal unit and immediately before and after handling your baby.**

## Who needs to know that my baby has Pseudomonas or MRSA?

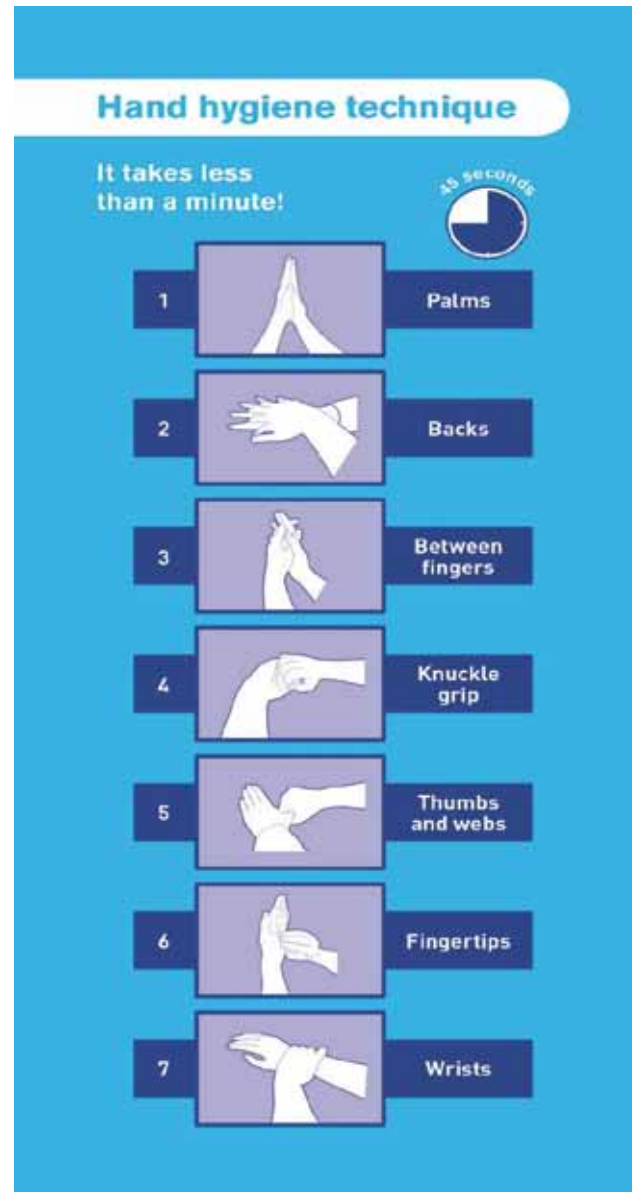
If your baby needs to be moved or transferred to another unit we will let the staff in that unit know about the Pseudomonas or MRSA. On discharge from the Neonatal Unit, staff will inform your Community Midwife, Health Visitor and GP.

If your baby needs to be re-admitted to the same hospital or admitted to a different hospital in the future, please remember to tell the doctors and nurses looking after your baby about the Pseudomonas or MRSA, as your baby's notes may not be available immediately.

## The importance of hand hygiene

Good hand hygiene will help prevent the spread of germs. Please wash your hands using the 7-steps to hand hygiene diagram illustrated<sup>1</sup>. Nursing staff will show you how to use hand sanitiser/hand-gel should you have any queries.

<sup>1</sup> Hand hygiene Information leaflet for patients and visitors, PHA.



If you require further advice / information, please contact a member of staff within the unit.

NNNI April 2017



## Information for Parents

### Routine testing for Pseudomonas and MRSA in Neonatal Units

In Northern Ireland every baby admitted to a neonatal unit is tested on admission and then weekly throughout their stay.



**“Infection Prevention & Control is Everyone’s Business”**



## Testing in the Neonatal Unit

This leaflet provides information for parents on routine testing procedures that take place when a baby is admitted to a neonatal unit. Babies admitted to a neonatal unit are generally more prone to infection due to their prematurity or illness.

The purpose of testing for specific germs is to reduce the risk of infection within neonatal units. Staff in the unit will explain the testing procedure to you.

Everyone carries germs on their skin, and mostly these are harmless, however it is helpful to know if your baby is carrying Pseudomonas/MRSA as we can then plan their care more effectively.

## What is Pseudomonas?

Pseudomonas is a germ that is commonly found in soil and water which can occasionally cause infection. In hospitals Pseudomonas germs can sometimes be found in moist/wet areas or equipment.

Pseudomonas may sometimes cause infection in babies who are already unwell, or who do not have a strong or fully developed immune system.

## What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common germ that is found on

the skin and in the nose of about a third of healthy people.

MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that has become resistant to some commonly used antibiotics. This means that the germ cannot be treated effectively with these antibiotics. Where needed, Doctors will use an alternative treatment.

## Can Pseudomonas or MRSA harm my baby?

Most of the time Pseudomonas and MRSA germs may live harmlessly on the skin without affecting baby - this is called *colonisation*. Occasionally germs may enter the body and cause harm – this is called *infection*.

## How will my baby be tested?

Staff will take nasal swabs, moistened with sterile water/fluid from your baby's nose and bottom area. Other sites may be swabbed using the same technique if required. Swabs are then sent to the laboratory for testing.

## How soon after testing will I know if my baby has Pseudomonas/MRSA colonisation?

The swab results are usually available within 3 working days. If swabs come back with a positive result it usually means that your baby is carrying Pseudomonas or MRSA germs on their skin. Staff will discuss the results with you.

## What happens if my baby is found to have Pseudomonas/MRSA ?

The staff looking after your baby will give you advice on any precautions you need to take when caring for your baby and they will answer any questions you may have.

Hospital staff may also need to take additional precautions with babies who have Pseudomonas or MRSA in order to help prevent any spread of infections in the neonatal unit. Babies with Pseudomonas or MRSA may be nursed in a separate room or area of the neonatal unit, either alone or with other babies who are also known to have Pseudomonas or MRSA.

If your baby is colonised or infected staff will:

- Contact you
- Discuss how your baby will be cared for
- Advise on precautions
- Answer any queries you may have.