Screening for Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria – MRSA and VRE  
Patient Information Sheet

Over the past several years, the number of bacteria (germs) resistant to antibiotics (medication) has increased significantly. Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and Vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) are the most common types of resistant bacteria found in hospitals.

These germs do not cause any health problems for most people. However they can occasionally cause infections, especially in patients who are already sick. No treatment is required unless the patient has an infection. These infections can be more difficult to treat due to the limited choice of antibiotics.

In hospitals, these germs can be spread between patients. Screening patients for MRSA and VRE is an important step for preventing spread. Screening means looking for the presence of these germs by taking cultures of your nose, rectum and wounds. If the culture result shows the presence of MRSA or VRE, additional precautions are put in place. This could include transferring you to a private room and the use of gown and gloves for everyone entering your room.

Today, we need to collect screening cultures for the following reason:

- **Admission screening**
  All patients admitted to the unit are screened for MRSA and VRE at time of admission.

- **Contact screening**
  At some point during your hospital stay, a patient on a unit where you were also admitted has been found positive for resistant bacteria. Screening for this microbe will be done today and may be repeated in the following weeks during your hospital stay.

- **Outbreak screening**
  Transmission of a resistant microbe (MRSA or VRE) has occurred on the unit where you are admitted. The hospital has declared an outbreak and control measures have been put in place. These include additional cleaning and restricting the transfer of patients from room to room. In addition, patients are screened every week and at time of discharge from the unit. The outbreak will be declared over once the Infection Control Service is certain that no further transmission is occurring.

Thank you for your cooperation.