

Microbiology User Information: Screening swabs- MRSA, CRE, VRE/GRE

Specimen Types:

Swabs:

- MRSA as per infection control policy: Nose, Groin and any wounds
- VRE/GRE and CRE screening: rectal specimens (swabs with visible faecal material or discoloration) are the most sensitive for detecting CPE colonisation or a faecal specimen.

Indications for Swab Samples:

Primary Care antimicrobial guidelines: : [Primary Care Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines](#)

For use within Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust only:

Hospital antimicrobial guidelines for MRSA Eradication: [MRSA Eradication \(formularywkccgmtw.co.uk\)](#)

MTW Trust Infection Control handbook is available on the MTW intranet site

[Control and management of MRSA including screening and de-colonisation](#)

Request form requirements:

Providing adequate clinical details to microbiology request forms is vital for the safety of laboratory staff and ensuring patient tests are correctly interpreted.

Please include details of relevant clinical information, current, just finished or intended antibiotic therapy. Please state if yeast infection is suspected.

Time to laboratory:

Specimens should be transported and processed as soon as possible

Transport swabs are stable at room temperature for 24 hours but refrigerate samples where possible

If processing is delayed, store refrigerated, rather than at room temperature

For information on transport, including days and times, please see [Pathology Transport Services](#)

Laboratory Testing:

All Microbiology laboratory investigations are based on UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations which can be found [HERE](#). If further advice is required, please contact the laboratory

Laboratory Turn Around Time (from Date/Time of Receipt in Laboratory):

MRSA screening- 2 days

CRE screening- 2 days

GRE screening- 4 days

Time limit for requesting additional investigations:

7 days




Requests for extra tests must be received within the sample storage period and must be accompanied by a request form. Please telephone the laboratory before requesting extra tests to ensure the sample is available and still viable

Adverse factors affecting the interpretation of microscopy and culture results:

- Delays in processing may result in degradation of microorganism which generates results that do not reflect the true clinical situation
- Excessive temperature

Note: rapid transport to the laboratory is the best way to minimise uncertainty of results

Specimen Collection:

<p>Collection Containers</p>	<p>MRSA Screening Swabs: Gel plain trans swab or charcoal trans swab</p>  <p>Rectal Swabs: Charcoal Transport medium:</p>  <p>Faeces:</p> 
<p>Specimen Type</p>	<p>Swabs or Faeces</p>
<p>Collection Methods</p>	<p>Anterior nares (one swab of both nostrils) Groin (one swab of both sides): If sampling a dry site or the nose, immerse swab into sterile sodium chloride 0.9% (normal saline) or the transport medium to moisten the swab. Rub the swab firmly into the anterior nares of the nostril and other areas – a separate swab should be used for different areas.</p>

Place the swabs in the transport medium

Correctly label swab and request form with patient's relevant clinical details and write MRSA screen on request form

Rectal Swabs: Swabs must have visible faecal material