What is this medicine for?

Mupirocin (Bactroban) is a prescription antibiotic ointment that is used for treating some infections on the skin that are caused by “Staph” bacteria. It is especially effective in treating methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus or “MRSA.”

The most common places MRSA is carried are in the nostrils, in the armpits, under the fingernails, and around the anus. Many people with recurrent MRSA infections on their skin are “carriers” of these bacteria.

Using intranasal (in the nose) mupirocin lowers the number of bacteria in the nostrils. This often lowers the number of repeated MRSA skin infections.

How do I apply mupirocin to my nose?

The goal is to get a light coating of mupirocin into the opening of the nostrils only. This is easiest to do using a cotton swab (Q-tip).

- Put a pea-sized amount on the tip of a cotton swab and gently insert the tip into 1 nostril. Roll it gently around the nostril opening.
- Using a NEW cotton swab, repeat this in the opening of the other nostril.
- To evenly spread the ointment around, press the sides of your nose together to close your nostrils and release to open them. Do this several times for about 1 minute.

The shaded area shows where to apply mupirocin
Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

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- Be careful not to touch your eyes after applying the ointment to your nose.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you are done.

How often do I apply mupirocin to my nose?

Do this twice a day for the first 5 days of every month. For example, you would use it twice a day on February 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, then stop and restart using it again twice a day on March 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Continue using mupirocin at the beginning of each month for as long as your doctor has advised.

Are there side effects?

- Many people notice the smell or taste of the ointment after applying it.
- Inserting the cotton swab too far into your nose can cause damage inside your nose or nosebleeds, so apply the ointment only just inside your nostrils.
- Some people get a headache at first. This should go away after using the ointment a few times.
- Rarely, some people are allergic to the mupirocin or other ingredients in the ointment. Stop using mupirocin and call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms after applying it:
  - Itchy, swollen, or red nose
  - A new rash on your body

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