

# Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Acute Care

## What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a type of common bacteria that lives on human skin and in noses of many healthy people. Some strains have become resistant to many antibiotics. MRSA can affect people in different ways. Some people may carry it in their nose or on their skin without showing any signs of illness. MRSA can also cause infections such as boils, wounds, or pneumonia. MRSA can live on surfaces for a long time.

## Can it be treated?

Treatment is not always required. Those who carry it on their skin or in their nose without having any symptoms do not need treatment. If an infection develops, it can be treated with antibiotics, local skin care, or a combination of both.

## How to prevent the spread of MRSA?

**Hand hygiene** is the most important step in stopping the spread of MRSA. Clean your hands with an alcohol based hand rub or use soap and water before and after meals, and before leaving your room.

If you have MRSA, you will be on special precautions in the hospital:

- Everyone who provides care for you or has contact with items in your room wears a gown and gloves.
- Precautions are continued when you go for diagnostic tests.
- Everyone who provides care for you must clean their hands before and after care.
- You may be asked to stay in your room and stay away from common patient areas such as the kitchenette and TV room.

We understand that these measures may be inconvenient for you and your family, but it is important that we protect other patients from MRSA. We appreciate your cooperation.

## What about visitors?

Everyone who visits you should clean their hands before entering and leaving the room. They must report to the nurses' station before entering the room.

Your visitors will not need to put on gowns and gloves unless they are involved in your care (e.g. assisting with bathing). Your visitors should not visit anyone else in the hospital after visiting you.

## What if I am admitted again?

If you are ever admitted to the hospital in the future, we ask that you tell the hospital staff of your MRSA history so that special precautions will be taken.

## Do I need to follow special measures at home?

Be yourself. Carry on with your activities. The special precautions used in the hospital are not necessary at home. Visiting health care providers may use gowns and gloves to prevent spread of MRSA to other clients.

Avoid spreading MRSA to family members by:

- Cleaning hands before direct contact with frail family members and babies.
- Hand washing after using the toilet.
- Washing dishes and cutlery in household dishwashing liquid (disposable utensils are not necessary).
- Using regular household disinfectant cleaners
- Cleaning laundry using regular wash and dry cycles.
- Using your own personal soap, towels, and personal care items.
- Keeping your bathroom clean including taps and toilet flush handles.

There are no concerns for healthy adults or children in the home. Consult with your doctor if you have concerns about a family member who may be at high risk of developing infection.