

METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)

Information for Patients and Families



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What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. This is a type of common bacteria which has become resistant to most of the antibiotics normally used to treat it. 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. This is known as colonization. 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. In some cases, attempts to eliminate skin colonization have been successful. If an infection develops, there are effective antibiotics available.

How can we prevent the spread of MRSA?

Hand washing is the most important measure for you, your visitors, the doctors, nurses and anyone who provides care. Hands are to be washed with an antiseptic hand soap or waterless antiseptic hand cleanser before leaving the room.

Special measures will be used during your care in order to prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients:

- Everyone who provides direct care or has contact with items in the room wears a gown and gloves.
- Precautions are continued when you go for diagnostic tests or when you come out of your room.
- You are restricted from common patient areas such as kitchenettes and TV rooms.

We understand that these isolation precaution 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?

- Visitors must clean hands before entering and leaving the room.
- Visitors are not required to gown and glove unless providing direct care.
- Visitors should not visit anywhere else in the hospital.

What if I am admitted again?

If you are ever admitted to hospital in the future, we ask that you tell the hospital staff of your MRSA history. You may be placed in a single room and special precautions may be taken.

Do I need to follow special measures at home?

Be yourself. Carry on with your activities. The isolation practices used in the hospital are not necessary at home.

Visiting Health Care Workers may use gowns and gloves when providing direct care to prevent the spread of MRSA to other clients.

You can avoid spreading MRSA to family members by:

- Hand washing before direct contact with frail family members and babies
- Hand washing after using the toilet
- Washing dishes and cutlery in household dish washing liquid
- Using regular household disinfectant cleaners
- Cleaning laundry using regular wash and dry cycles
- Using your own soap, towels, and personal care items
- Keeping your own bathroom clean, including taps and toilet flush handles

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