

MRSA AT HOME

WHAT SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS ARE REQUIRED?

Generally speaking, people in the hospital are sicker and more susceptible to infection than people in the community. Therefore, once at home, precautions need not be as strict. Nonetheless, certain steps can help reduce the risk of spreading the germ to family members and other visitors.

HAND CARE

Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds after using the toilet, blowing your nose, before eating, or before preparing food. If you have a wound dressing, gloves should be worn for wound care, and hands washed immediately after glove removal. Caregivers should wash their hands after providing care. Gloves should be used to handle body fluids or soiled items. Discard disposable gloves in the regular garbage or clean rubber gloves after use.



EATING

No special precautions are required.

CLEANING YOUR HOME

No special precautions are required. This bacteria is easily destroyed by any household cleaning product. Wet a clean cloth thoroughly with a properly diluted cleaning product. Wipe surfaces starting from the cleanest area and moving towards the dirtiest area. Let the surfaces air dry. This will allow enough contact time with the cleaning product to kill the bacteria.

LAUNDRY

.Clothing may be washed as usual. If items are heavily soiled with body fluids (e.g. urine, stool), rinse them prior to washing with detergent.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Put all disposable waste (like dressings and bandages) into plastic bags. Tie the bags and dispose in regular garbage.

This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask your nurse, Infection Prevention & Control Practitioner or your physician.

If you are not a patient in the hospital but would like more information regarding MRSA, contact your physician or the Eastern Ontario Health Unit.

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**METHICILLIN
RESISTANT
STAPHYLOCOCCUS
AUREUS
(MRSA)**



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WHAT IS MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacteria or germ which can live in the nose, on the skin, or in the lower intestine. Some people carry the *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria but do not have an infection. Sometimes people develop infections with this bacteria and require treatment. When common antibiotics are not able to destroy *Staphylococcus aureus*, the bacteria is called "resistant", or MRSA. Infections caused by MRSA are not more serious than infections caused by the regular *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria. However, only a few antibiotics will treat MRSA infections. .

WHO GETS MRSA?

People with weak immune systems, or those who have taken many antibiotics, are most likely to get MRSA. It can occur in people who have been in the hospital for a long time, or who have had many medical procedures. Recent hospitalization also increases your risk of acquiring this bacteria.

People may become colonized with MRSA, which means that they are carrying the bacteria but it is not making them sick. Other people may become infected with MRSA, which means that the bacteria is making them sick.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Although MRSA is not more harmful than many other types of common bacteria, it can cause an infection if it gets into a wound, the bloodstream, or another place inside the body that is normally free of germs. When a person has an infection with MRSA, it can be difficult to treat because the usual antibiotics can't get rid of it. Stronger and more expensive antibiotics are usually required to treat MRSA infections.



CAN IT BE SPREAD?

Yes, MRSA can be spread or transmitted to other people through touch. It can survive on regular surfaces and on hands for a certain time period. It is easy to kill, though, with proper use of disinfectants and good hand washing. This bacteria does not travel through the air but it can easily come to live in the nose if your hands are carrying the bacteria when you touch your nose. .



PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION IN THE HOSPITAL

WHAT SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS ARE REQUIRED?

It is important that special precautions are taken to stop the bacteria from spreading to other patients in the hospital.

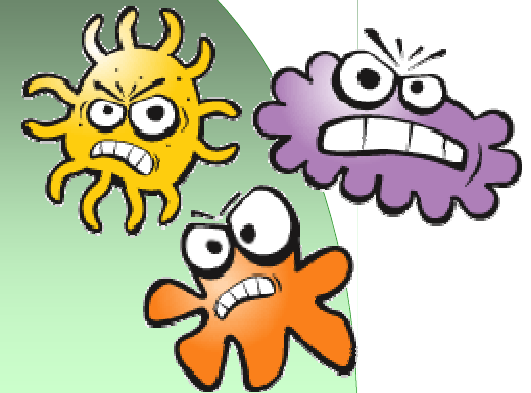
- You will be placed in a private room, if available
- A gown, gloves and a mask must be worn by everyone who comes into your room.
- Your room and the equipment used in your room will be kept clean with a disinfectant.
- You must stay in your room at all times. If it is necessary for you to go to another part of the hospital (for example the x-ray department), you must first wash your hands. You may also be required to put on a mask. Staff members who are involved with procedures outside your room will also wear gloves, gowns and masks.

CAN FAMILY MEMBERS VISIT?

You may have visitors. However, they must wear a gown, mask and gloves while in your room. These will be provided by the hospital. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves, mask and gown and dispose in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room.

It is also very important for visitors to wash their hands for at least 15 seconds when leaving the room.

Visitors should ask the nurse how to proceed if they wish to bring items into the room or remove items from the room.



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW PRIOR TO DISCHARGE?

If you have been prescribed antibiotics to clear the MRSA, it is important to take the medication completely and as directed. When seeking medical attention, please inform the health care providers of your MRSA status. This will allow them to take the appropriate steps to avoid spreading the bacteria to others. If readmitted to any hospital, a single room and special precautions may be required.