



Patient & Family Information

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus – (MRSA)

What is Methicillin-Resistant Staph aureus (MRSA)?

Staphylococcus aureus (*S. aureus*) is a germ that lives on the skin and mucous membranes of healthy people. Occasionally *S. aureus* can cause an infection. When *S. aureus* develops resistance to certain antibiotics, it is called methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA. If left untreated MRSA infections may develop into serious, life-threatening complications such as infection of the bloodstream, bones and/or lungs.

How does MRSA spread?

MRSA is usually spread through direct physical contact, usually on the hands. MRSA lives on the skin and in body fluids. MRSA also lives on objects and surfaces like doorknobs, elevator buttons, towels, sheets and wound dressings.

What special precautions are required for MRSA?

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

- You will stay in a room by yourself or in a shared room with a patient who also has MRSA. The door to your room may remain open.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind everyone who enters your room about the special precautions that must be taken. Everyone who cares for you or visits you will wear gloves and a long-sleeved gown.
- Your room and the equipment used in your room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- You will clean your hands and put on a clean gown before you leave your room.
- Everyone who leaves your room will clean their hands.
- You will not visit shared areas such as patient lounges, cafes, coffee shops or gift shops, etc. Ask your nurse if you need something from the kitchenette or extra supplies, like sheets.
- You will try and minimize the number of personal items in your room.

What about family and visitors?

Family and visitors can still visit you in hospital.

- The signs outside your room will show them how to safely wear gloves and a gown.
- They must clean their hands with hand sanitizer before entering and when leaving your room.

Continued on next page...

- Before leaving your room, they must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container located in your room.
- Your family and visitors should not assist other patients in your room. Instead, they can use the call bell to ask for help.
- Family and visitors in isolation rooms should not enter the kitchenette area or other supply areas. Ask a nurse for assistance.

Practice Good Hand Hygiene!

We invite you to ask anyone who enters your room to clean their hands before and after they touch you. Special attention should be paid to handwashing (15 seconds of soap and running water or using two pumps of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rubbing until hands are dry) as this is the most important practice to prevent the spread of bacteria. You should wash your hands:

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Before eating and drinking
- Before and after you touch your bandages /dressings or wounds
- When your hands are visibly dirty
- Before you leave your hospital room



What will happen at home?

If you have MRSA at the time of discharge from hospital, the following practices are recommended:

- Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet must wash their hands after contact with you.
- Clean your hands before you make any food and before you eat. Everyone in your household should follow this practice.
- Wash your hands well after using the toilet. Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards.
- Clothing may be laundered in the same manner as the rest of the household laundry.
- No special cleaning of furniture or dishes in the home is required.
- If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a germicidal cleanser.
- Cover cuts or open areas with a bandage/dressing and wash your hands well before and after touching these areas.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others.

Reference: Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) Routine Practices & Additional Precautions in All Healthcare Settings February 2013

Patient Information Sheet: MRSA / Infection Control Program / Last Revised: March 2019

