

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a bacteria that cannot be killed with the usual antibiotics. MRSA can be carried in the nose and on the skin. Anyone can be a carrier and not know it; this is known as colonization. MRSA is usually not harmful to healthy people but may cause infection in people who are immune compromised.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA has been found in hospitals, long term care facilities and in the community. It is mainly spread by contact with unwashed hands and shared equipment that has not been cleaned. It is not passed through the air. To prevent spreading MRSA, it is important that everyone perform good hand hygiene before entering and on leaving your room/home.

Signs and Symptoms:

If infected:

- Fever
- Swelling
- Redness

How is MRSA prevented?

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or sanitizer.
- Wash any cut or break in the skin with soap and water and apply clean, dry dressings on a daily basis.
- Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms) that may have had contact with an infected individual or potentially infectious material.
- Clean surfaces (e.g., counter tops, door handles) with a standard disinfectant on a regular basis.

Remember!

Good hand hygiene is the most important infection control practice to prevent and control the spread of microorganisms (bacteria, viruses).

Remind all staff and visitors to clean their hands before and after they touch you.

How is MRSA managed in the hospital?

Because hospitals are filled with people who are sick and more likely to develop an infection, precautions are needed to prevent the spread of these resistant bacteria.

- You will be placed on Contact Precautions with a sign on your door/bedspace.
- Caregivers and visitors should clean their hands and put on a gown, and gloves before entering your room or bed space.
- NO equipment should be removed from your room without being cleaned and disinfected by staff.

- Your room and the equipment used in your room should be cleaned and disinfected regularly by staff.
- Your personal items should be kept to a minimum. Please use the drawers/lockers available to you. This helps our housekeepers to keep your bed space clean.
- Everyone, prior to leaving your room or bed space, should remove their gown and gloves and clean their hands.
- Prior to walking around the unit, or hospital, please speak with your nurse.

What do I need to do at home?

If you are colonized or infected with MRSA at the time of discharge from hospital, the chance of spreading the bacteria to your family is small. But we do recommend you practice the following:

- Everyone who might help you should wash his or her hands after contact with you.
- No special handling of trash/garbage is required.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent transmission to other patients.
- No special precautions are required for visitors to your home.
- You may resume normal activities

Reference:

<https://www.york.ca/resource/methicillin-resistant-staphylococcus-aureus-mrsa-fact-sheet>

Heymann, D. L. (2022). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*. 21st edition. APHA Press, an imprint of American Public Health Association.