

CARE IN YOUR HOME

What will happen when I go home?

- Good handwashing, good personal hygiene and good housekeeping are important and should always be done to maintain good health. These practices will help prevent the spread of MRSA to other persons in your home.
- Always tell your doctor or other healthcare providers if you are MRSA positive. This helps prevent the spread to others and helps your doctor choose the right antibiotics, if necessary.

House Cleaning

- * No special cleaning of clothing, furniture or items (e.g. dishes) is required.
- * Clean the toilet and sink weekly with a cleanser that reads “disinfectant” on the label. Disinfectants need enough time to kill MRSA; therefore, wet surfaces with disinfectant and allow to air dry.

Handwashing

- * Wash your hands before making any food and before eating. This practice should be followed by everyone in your house.
- * Wash your hands after using the washroom.
- * Everyone who might help you with using the washroom or with your personal hygiene should wash their hands after contact with you.

Why Clean your hands?

- ◆ Even if your hands look clean, they may carry harmful germs. In order to stop the spread of these germs, you must clean your hands.

How to clean hands properly?

Soap and Water

- ◆ Wet hands under warm running water, apply soap and lather.
- ◆ Using friction cover all surfaces of hands including the palm and back of hands, fingertips, nail beds, between fingers and thumbs for a minimum of 20 seconds; rinse with water.
- ◆ Dry hands with paper towel. Use a new paper towel to turn off taps.

Alcohol Hand Sanitizer

- ◆ Apply 2 pumps of alcohol to hands
- ◆ Rub hands together covering all surfaces of the hand as listed above until hands are completely dry.



Five Hills Health Region
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Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

Five Hills Health Region
Regional Infection Prevention &
Control Department



**Information for
Patients / Residents
and Visitors**

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus

What is MRSA?

- Staphylococcus aureus (Staph) is a type of bacteria that is commonly found on the skin and in the nares of about 30 % of healthy people without causing illness (this is called colonization). The same bacteria can cause infection, under the right conditions, which may require treatment with antibiotics. Staph bacteria are easily treatable.
- The usual antibiotic used to treat infections caused by Staph was a penicillin-like antibiotic called Methicillin. Unfortunately some staph are no longer killed by Methicillin and are therefore called Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA. If an antibiotic resistant bacteria such as MRSA causes an infection, then a stronger antibiotic must be used for treatment.
- If these infections are left untreated they may develop into more serious conditions such as bloodstream infections, bone infections or pneumonia.

How is MRSA Spread?

- MRSA has been found in the community and the hospital setting on persons and their surroundings. You may have MRSA and not be ill; however you can still spread it to others and they can become ill.
- MRSA is usually spread through direct physical contact or through contact with contaminated surfaces. You can spread it to others if you don't clean your hands properly.

Therefore, handwashing is the most important practice in the prevention of the spread of this bacteria.

What happens if you have MRSA and you are admitted into a Healthcare

Facility?

In a healthcare facility, patients who have MRSA will be placed on isolation to prevent the spread of the bacteria to other patients. Isolation will involve the following:

- You will need to remain in your room for the duration of your hospital stay. You are allowed out of your room for essential purposes only (i.e. medical tests and treatments). You will be required to wash your hands, wear a gown and gloves before exiting the room.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind staff and visitors about the additional precautions to be used before entering and exiting your room.
- Healthcare workers are required to wear gowns and gloves while in your room. This will help prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients.
- Visitors are also required to wear a gown and gloves while in your room.
- Hands can be cleaned by washing with soap and water or by rubbing hands with an alcohol hand sanitizer.

What may be different in a Long Term Care Facility?

- While on **Contact Precautions**, gowns and gloves will be required for personal care by staff and visitors. You may be allowed out of your room for some activities if the positive MRSA site can be covered and secretions contained.
- Hand hygiene will be required to be performed when leaving room, before eating and before participating in group activities.

It is very important for staff and visitors to wash their hands before

entering and exiting your room.

- Patients / residents are at an increased risk of acquiring MRSA due to the fact they are already ill with another health condition or weakened

Why try and prevent the spread of MRSA?

immune system. An infection with MRSA may increase the severity of the patients illness, duration and cost of their stay in facility.

Can my family or visitors get MRSA?

- If family and visitors follow the instructions on the Additional Precautions sign posted on your door, the risk of acquiring MRSA is minimal.

Will MRSA go away?

- Many people with MRSA get rid of the bacteria on their own after a period of time. Sometimes people with MRSA require treatment with antibiotics if it is causing an infection.
- Even if you no longer test positive for MRSA, we will continue to test you every time you are admitted into the hospital. This in order to protect other patients / residents / visitors and staff.
- There are instances when the MRSA test result will revert back to positive due to increased risk factors or medication use.

Do not be shy about reminding everyone to wash their hands.