

MRSA - Fact Sheet for Patients

WHAT IS MRSA?

Staphylococcus 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.

HOW IS MRSA SPREAD?

MRSA is spread from one person to another by contact, usually on the hands of caregivers. MRSA can be present on the caregiver's hands either from touching contaminated material excreted by the infected person or from touching articles contaminated by the skin of a person with MRSA, such as towels, sheets and wound dressings. MRSA can live on hands and objects in the environment.

WHAT SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR MRSA?

It is important that special precautions are taken to stop MRSA from spreading to other patients. These precautions include:

- A long-sleeved gown and gloves must be worn by everyone who cares for you
- A sign may be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room

GOOD HAND HYGIENE PRACTICES:

Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they touch you. Ask your nurse or doctor to demonstrate proper hand hygiene techniques (15 seconds of soap and running water OR waterless alcohol hand rub until hands are dry).

You need to clean your hands:

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose
- Before eating and drinking

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT HOME?

If you have MRSA at the time of discharge from hospital, the chance of spreading the germ to your family is small. But, we do recommend that you practice the following:

- Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you
- Clothing may be laundered in the same manner as the rest of the household laundry
- It is encouraged to maintain a clean home, free from dust and visible soil. No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g. dishes) in the home is required.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others.

Ask your health care provider if you require additional information
