



MRSA: In the Hospital and at Home

MRSA: Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* INFECTION PREVENTION: IT'S IN YOUR HANDS!

WHAT IS MRSA?

MRSA is Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a "super" germ that can make you very ill. It is difficult to treat and resistant to common antibiotics. It can keep you in the hospital longer. When you have MRSA, you can pass it to others without knowing it.

WHO CAN GET MRSA?

Anyone can get MRSA, but you are more at risk:

- If you are over age 65
- If you have a chronic disease such as diabetes, cancer or heart disease
- If you have a break in your skin — from surgery, sores, scrapes or burns
- If you have any tubes in your body, fresh surgery wounds or openings in your skin
- If you are in a crowded place like a hospital, nursing home or day care
- If you often take antibiotics when you are ill or stop your antibiotics before they are finished
- If you take antibiotics that are not prescribed for you

HOW DO I GET MRSA?

Anyone can get MRSA. You can get this germ the same way you can get the common cold.

This means touching someone with MRSA or something that has MRSA on it and then touching your eyes, nose or skin.

You can get MRSA if you:

- Touch the skin, nose or hands of someone who has MRSA
- Use the personal items such as razors, toothbrushes, towels, etc., of someone who has MRSA
- Touch objects such as phones, doorknobs and TV remote controls that have MRSA on them

MRSA can live on people, surfaces and items for months. However, you can kill MRSA by using effective cleaning methods.

YOU can avoid passing MRSA to other people by washing or cleaning your hands!

- Hand washing or cleaning is the most important thing you can do to avoid spreading MRSA to other people
- Remind other people to wash or clean their hands

*Everyone can work to prevent infection!
It's okay to ask health care providers if they have cleaned their hands.*



HOW CAN I HELP STOP MRSA FROM SPREADING TO OTHER PEOPLE?

1. Protect yourself and other people by telling all your health care providers if you are a MRSA carrier.
 - Remind the health care team if you are a carrier before you have any surgery
2. Wash or clean your hands:
 - Hand washing or cleaning is the easiest way to prevent MRSA from spreading
 - Use the antimicrobial soap in your room and found throughout the hospital
 - Use an alcohol hand cleaner in your room, near your room and found throughout the hospital
 - Wash or clean your hands as you leave and enter your room
3. Make your room into a “clean space”:
 - Wash or clean your hands before and after all group activities such as physical therapy, exercise, card games, bingo games, etc.
4. If you use a wheelchair:
 - Wash or clean your hands often
 - If you use wheelchair gloves, wash or clean them every day

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND OTHER PEOPLE FROM MRSA:

1. Wash or clean your hands before and after you care for yourself or others who may have MRSA.
2. Tell family members and other people in close contact to wash or clean their hands.
3. Wash or clean your hands before holding or feeding a child.

4. Always cover wounds or skin lesions with clean, dry bandages. Wash or clean your hands and put on clean disposable gloves to:
 - Change bandages
 - Clean a wound
 - Touch a wound or a dirty bandage
5. After caring for a wound:
 - Remove gloves so they are inside out
 - Do not touch the outside of the gloves
 - Carefully dispose of the gloves
 - Never touch the used gloves after they are off your hands
 - Wash or clean your hands again
6. Do not share towels, washcloths, razors, clothing or other personal items.
7. Clean rooms and personal items daily. Use a store-bought disinfectant (cleaner) or make your own (1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart of water):
 - Wash soiled linens and clothes in hot water and laundry detergent. Dry in a dryer *set to hot* if you can.
 - Wash utensils and dishes with dish detergent and *hot* water. Use a dishwasher if you can.

VA HELPS TO PREVENT MRSA SPREAD IN HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES — VA WILL:

1. Place Veterans who test positive for MRSA in a private room or with other patients who have the same germ.
2. Give antibiotics for MRSA only to patients who have symptoms and are sick with MRSA or who have surgery. This is to prevent MRSA from becoming resistant to current treatments.

