



Patient and Family Information Sheet: Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a strain of germs called Staph. aureus which is resistant to multiple antibiotics. A person may have the germs and have no illness, or they may have an infection (show signs of illness). For MRSA to cause an infection it must get into an open wound, the lungs, intravenous catheter site, or a urinary catheter. It is spread by skin-to-skin touching.

What can I do at home to stop the spread of germs?

- Hand washing has been found to be the most important thing anyone can do to prevent spreading germs from one person to another!
- A waterless hand washing agent can be purchased at a pharmacy or grocery store. Use this when a sink is not nearby.
- **When to wash your hands?**
 1. After coughing or sneezing
 2. After going to the bathroom
 3. Before preparing food, eating, or drinking
 4. Before applying make-up or handling contact lenses
 5. Before and after handling wound dressings, and after removing gloves

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS:

1. Turn water on.
2. Wet hands.
3. Apply liquid hand soap to the hands.
4. Rub hands for 10 -15 seconds; rub between fingers and around nails.
5. Rinse with running water.
6. Dry with a paper towel.
7. Use dirty paper towel to turn off faucet (remember your hands were dirty when you turned on the faucet)
8. A waterless hand cleanser may be handy when a sink is not nearby.

Use disposable tissues rather than handkerchiefs.

Handkerchiefs hold germs in them, and then things you touch become covered with germs.

After coughing or sneezing into a tissue, discard in a trash bag

Keep a plastic bag or paper bag nearby to discard tissues when having cold symptoms

Avoid putting used tissues on surfaces (like a table) where others could pick up the germs on their hands

A waterless washing agent is excellent to have at your side when it is not convenient to get to a sink to wash hands

If MRSA is in a wound:

- Wash your hands before changing the dressing
- Apply gloves to remove the soiled dressing
- Remove gloves and wash your hands
- After hands are dry, put on a new pair of gloves
- Apply new dressing
- Remove gloves and wash your hands
- If wound drainage gets on bed linens or clothing
- Be careful to keep soiled linens away from your clothing
- Wash soiled linen separate from other family's clothing
- When possible, use hot water and bleach to wash soiled linens
- It is best to wash soiled linen as soon as possible
- If linens cannot be washed right away, place in a plastic trash bag until able to wash them
- Dispose of the trash bag do not reuse.

If wound drainage gets on the floor or other surfaces

1. Wear gloves
2. Absorb the drainage with a paper towel or rag
3. Discard paper towel in trash
4. Wipe the area with soap and water
5. Use any household cleaner to wipe the area
6. Bleach and water is an effective, inexpensive cleaner
7. Remove and discard gloves in the trash and wash hands

REMEMBER!!

The most important step you take to prevent spreading germs is hand washing!

Our thanks to the Visiting Nurse Association of Colchester, VT for permission to use this information.