

WHAT IS MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ that lives on the skin 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 directly touching discharge from the infected person or from touching the infected environment 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 steps are taken to stop MRSA from spreading to other patients in the hospital. These steps include:

- Single room if possible (the door can remain open)
- 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

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY/VISITORS?

Your family and visitors should not help other patients with their personal care as this may cause the germ to spread. They may be required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and put them in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room. Then they must clean their hands.

GOOD HAND WASHING PRACTICES:

Remind all staff and visitors to use good hand washing before and after they touch you. Ask your nurse or doctor to show you proper hand washing steps (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
- Before and after you touch your dressing or wounds
- When your hands are visibly dirty (soiled)
- Before you leave your room



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 care or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you.
- Wash your hands before you make any food and before you eat. This practice should be followed by everyone in the household.
- Wash your hands well after using the toilet. Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards.
- Clothing may be laundered in the same manner as the rest of the household laundry.
- 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.

