


**STOP THE SPREAD.
WASH YOUR HANDS.**

**What
Methicillin
Resistant
*Staphylococcus
aureus*
(MRSA)
means to me
and my family**



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What is *Staphylococcus aureus*?

You may have heard about a germ called *Staph*. It is also called *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a common germ or bacteria that lives on the skin and in the noses of many healthy people. Most often it does not cause problems. When it does cause an infection, it is usually minor and can be treated without antibiotics. *Staphylococcus aureus* infections usually involve the skin only. It can cause boils, pimples and infections in cuts. It rarely leads to a more serious infection.

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Methicillin is a type of antibiotic that does not work for MRSA infections. However, there are other antibiotics that do work against MRSA infections.

How is MRSA treated?

Some people need treatment and some do not.

Some people have MRSA on their skin, nose or other areas. These people never have any symptoms. They never develop an infection and do not need treatment.

Some people may get an infection. This is usually on the skin. These infections may be treated with antibiotics, local

skin care or a combination of both. Local skin care may include draining boils or abscesses by a doctor or other health care provider. The doctor may prescribe an antibiotic in either a tablet, capsule or liquid form. The person takes these types of antibiotics by swallowing them. Sometimes the antibiotic needs to be given through a small tube put into a vein. This is called an IV or intravenous.

Make sure you or your family member takes all the antibiotic, until it is gone, unless the doctor says to stop taking it. It is important when people take antibiotics that they take all the doses the doctor tells them to. This needs to happen even when the infection is getting better.



What can I do to prevent others from getting MRSA?

1. **Remind everyone to:** wash their hands with either soap and water or a waterless alcohol based hand rub.
2. Keep wounds, cuts and scrapes clean and covered until healed.
3. Use your own towel, washcloth, razor, soap, creams, lotion, cosmetics, toothbrush, comb, brush, nail files or any other personal items. Do not share.
4. Use your own sports equipment. Sharing sports equipment has caused the spread of MRSA among athletes.
5. Wash and dry laundry in the regular cycle of your washer and dryer. This kills any germs.
6. Keep your home, office, and car clean. Common household detergents are acceptable cleaning agents.
7. Shower or bathe regularly with soap and water.
8. Always tell the doctor or health care providers that you or your child has MRSA. This helps them give the best treatment and prevent the spread of this germ to others.

What happens if someone with MRSA needs to be admitted to hospital?

Please tell the admitting staff if you know you or your family member has MRSA.

We are very careful when we know someone has MRSA. We follow certain steps to protect the health and safety of you, your family, visitors, other patients and staff. These steps are called infection control precautions. These steps may include:

- ▶ A sign being put on the door to the patient's room telling health care providers and visitors of any special equipment that they should use such as gowns and gloves.
- ▶ Reminding you to wash your hands often and especially before leaving the room.
- ▶ Asking you to stay in your room and not spend time in other areas of the hospital.
- ▶ Health care workers and visitors washing their hands with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub when entering or leaving the room and while providing care.

Do not be shy about reminding everyone to wash his or her hands. Your help is important to us.

Does MRSA go away?

Sometimes MRSA may go away, but often it does not. Some people have MRSA on their skin, nose or other areas and do not have any symptoms of infection. These people are called carriers and do not need any treatment. If an infection develops, your doctor will decide what treatment is needed.

Questions?

For more information talk to your family doctor or ask for the Infection Control Practitioner at the hospital, health centre or agency.

It's good to ask!

The information in this pamphlet is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.