



MRSA EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SHEET

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. This type of bacteria causes "staph" infections that are resistant to treatment with usual antibiotics.

Methicillin-resistant strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) became a clinically significant problem in the late 1960's.

Healthcare-associated MRSA occurs among patients who undergo invasive medical procedures or who have weakened immune systems and are being treated in hospitals and healthcare facilities such as nursing homes and dialysis centers. MRSA in healthcare settings may cause serious and potentially life threatening infections, such as bloodstream infections, surgical site infections, or pneumonia.

In addition to healthcare-associated MRSA, there is a different strain of MRSA that can also infect people in the community at large. This strain is called Community-acquired MRSA or CA-MRSA . Generally, it manifests as skin infections that may look like pimples or boils or an infected insect bite that can be swollen, painful and have draining pus. These skin infections can occur in otherwise healthy people.

MRSA is resistant to all beta-lactam antibiotics. This includes all penicillins (e.g., amoxicillin) and cephalosporins (e.g., keflex).

How is MRSA spread?

The most common mode of transmission for MRSA in healthcare facilities is through contact by the unwashed hands of personnel and contaminated objects such as stethoscopes, lab coats or equipment shared between patients. If appropriate hand hygiene, such as washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and other preventive measures such as barrier precautions (Contact precautions) are not performed, MRSA can be transmitted from a patient to the hands of a healthcare worker and then transmitted to other patients.

How do I educate patients about MRSA?

Patient education is critical to prevent spread of MRSA. We need to educate patients, caretakers, and when possible, household members on methods to avoid MRSA transmission to close contacts. **(Refer to the patient information sheet)**

Am I at risk for MRSA?

Staph infections, including MRSA occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities who have weakened immune systems. Rarely do colonized staff members (especially those with chronic skin infections such as eczema) become staphylococcal "shedders" and can cause outbreaks of staphylococcal disease in

the patients under their care. Authorities in the United States do not recommend routinely culturing personnel to determine if they are carriers since outbreaks due to carriers are uncommon.

Practicing good/ frequent hand hygiene and complying with contact isolation will reduce the risk of transmission.

How do I care for patients with MRSA?

In addition to Standard Precautions, use Contact Precautions. Contact precautions include the following practices:

- Placement in a private room
- Healthcare workers entering the room must wear gloves and gown if they have any contact with the patient and/or their environment
- Appropriate signage to alert healthcare workers of what type of precautions should be taken
- Dedicated equipment (i.e., thermometers, stethoscopes, and blood pressure cuffs)
- Clean patient care and personal equipment when leaving bedside
- Clean and disinfect the environment carefully, focus on "high touch" areas
- If patient must ambulate or leaves the room, he/she must wear a cover gown and cleanse hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol gel
- Ensure precautions are maintained when patient leaves room for procedures and/or therapy Plan and notify other department when patient is leaving room for any necessary procedure.
- Family and visitors may wear gown and gloves if they are participating in direct patient care (for example, wound care, bathing).

Practicing meticulous hand hygiene by staff and educating visitors about the institution's policies for Infection Prevention will help reduce the transmission.

How do I protect myself?

Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

- Practice good hygiene - keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Comply with your institution's policy in regard to controlling MDRO/MRSA
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items such as uniforms and personal protective equipment
- Be knowledgeable about all the resources and up-to-date information from regulatory agencies in regard to MRSA

References:

- *Institute for Healthcare Improvement Reduce MRSA Infection*
- *CDC Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings 2007*
- *CDC Website MRSA Information*