



# MRSA

## What is MRSA?

*Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as “staph” is a bacteria commonly found on the skin of healthy people. Occasionally, staph can get into the body and cause an infection. This infection can be minor such as pimples or boils, or serious such as blood infections or pneumonia. Methicillin is an antibiotic commonly used to treat staph infections. Although methicillin is very effective in treating most staph infections, some staph bacteria have developed resistance to methicillin and can no longer be killed by this antibiotic. These resistant bacteria are called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA.

## What is the difference between colonization and infection?

Colonization means that MRSA is present on or in the body without causing an illness. Infection means that MRSA is making the person sick.

## Who can have MRSA?

MRSA infection usually develops in hospital patients who are elderly, very ill, or who may have an open wound, or a tube (urinary catheter) going into their body.

## Where is MRSA found?

MRSA can be found on the skin, in the nose, and in blood and urine.

## Is MRSA treatable?

Yes. Although MRSA is resistant to many antibiotics, and is often difficult to treat, a few antibiotics can still successfully cure MRSA infections.

## Should a person with MRSA be isolated?

No, unless directed by a physician or wound is draining and cannot be covered. Healthy people are at very little risk of becoming infected with MRSA. Family members or visitors who are ill, or who have a weak immune system should limit their physical contact with a person who has MRSA to no more than casual contact. However, all family members and visitors must wash their hands with an antibacterial soap after physical contact with a person with MRSA.

## When a person with MRSA is being cared for at home, what precautions are to be taken?

- Wash your hands well using an antibacterial soap after caring for the person with MRSA.
- Periodically clean the person’s room and personal items with a commercial disinfectant or a fresh solution of one (1) part bleach and one hundred (100) parts water.
- Wear gloves if you handle body substances, (blood, urine, wound drainage). Remember to wash your hands after removing the gloves.
- The visiting Community Nurse will follow MRSA precautions in your home.
- **Please let the Community Nurse know if a person in your home has MRSA.**