



METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

Information for Residents and Visitors

What is METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)?

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ that normally lives in the nose, rectum and on human skin. MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that is not killed by the usual antibiotics.

How is MRSA spread?

Anyone can get MRSA. You can get it by touching someone or something that has the germs on it and then touching your skin or your nose.

Are certain people at risk of getting MRSA?

People most likely to get MRSA are those who:

- Are seriously ill
- Are hospitalized for a long time
- Have taken many antibiotics

Does everybody that comes in contact with MRSA become sick?

No, sometimes the germ lives on the body without causing infection and does not require treatment. This is called colonization. If you have an infection with MRSA you may need specific antibiotics.

MRSA...What does this mean for me in long term care?

If you do not have an infection no special precautions are needed for your care.

- Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of this germ
- All staff, family members and visitors should wash their hands before entering and when leaving your room
- A waterless hand sanitizer is available for use

If you have an active MRSA infection (such as an open weeping wound)...

- A sign will be placed to remind others about the precautions
- Staff will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care
- Family members who provide direct personal care require a gown and gloves
- You should always wash your hands if you have to leave your room
- All items in your room will be cleaned on a daily basis

What happens if I have to go to hospital?

- If you go to the hospital you will be placed in a private room on Contact Precautions
- The precautions are needed to prevent the spread of MRSA to other patients
- The nursing staff at the hospital will inform you and your family about these precautions

Will the MRSA go away?

- MRSA may go away on its own, but sometimes it does not
- You may be colonized but not have an active infection
- Your activities will not be restricted if you have MRSA colonization
- You will be permitted to take part in all activities and social events
- You should wash your hands frequently to stay healthy

Source: Provincial Infection Control (PIC-NL)

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