

### What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a germ that lives on the mucous membranes of healthy people. Some people have a type of *S. aureus* that is resistant to simple treatment like methicillin.

### What is MRSA Colonization?

If you have MRSA in your body and it is not causing an infection you are colonized. Although you are not sick because of this bacteria you could pass it on to someone else and make them sick.

### What is MRSA infection?

In people with a poor immune system MRSA may cause wound, skin or blood stream infection.

### How do I know if I have MRSA?

Individuals who have had frequent admissions to the hospital are at a higher risk for MRSA. If you have been in the hospital for more than 12 hours in the last 12 months we will take a swab. The lab reports if any MRSA grew on the swab.

### How is MRSA spread?

When a person has MRSA the bacteria from their bodies can contaminate surfaces such as tables, medical equipment, and fabrics. When touching these items our hands become contaminated. If we touch other patients without washing our hands they can become colonized or infected. This is why we must use additional precautions.

### What are additional precautions?

It is very important to contain the bacteria so it does not spread to others. We do this by:

1. Isolating MRSA patients and putting a "Contact Precautions" sign on the door.
2. Wearing a yellow long sleeved gown and gloves when entering the room to care for the patient.
3. Washing our hands before entering the room and after leaving the room.

### What about family and visitors?

Family and visitors must first talk with a nurse before coming into the room. Young visitors should be closely supervised.

- All visitors must wash hands before entering the room. After leaving the room visitors must wash hands with available waterless hand rub.
- Any visitors providing direct care for the patient (bathing, washing, toileting, dressing changes, care for open areas, and feeding) must wear a yellow long sleeved gown and gloves.
- Visitors must not visit other patients in the hospital during the same trip. This helps to ensure we do not spread the bacteria.

### What can I do to help?

1. Remind **all** staff caring for you to wash their hands when they enter your room and when they leave.
2. If you are going for tests in another department tell staff transporting you that you have MRSA.
3. MRSA is often carried in the nose. Try to avoid touching your nose and wash your hands often.
4. Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have any questions.

### What should I do at home?

Healthy people like your family and friends are at a low risk of getting MRSA.

- Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing or eating food.
- Anyone who helps you with your personal hygiene or toileting should wash their hands after contact with you
- No special cleaning or laundry precautions are needed.