



WHAT IS METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)?

- *Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria that normally lives in the nose, rectum and on human skin. It does not usually cause any harm.
- MRSA is a strain of *Staphylococcus aureus* that has developed resistance to most antibiotics that are usually used to kill it.

Colonization versus Infection

- Many bacteria live on and in the body without causing disease/infection. This is colonization. Colonization does not require treatment. These same bacteria under the right conditions can cause disease. This is infection.
- MRSA can colonize in the nose, the skin and the respiratory tract. It can cause infection in the respiratory tract, in surgical sites and in the blood.

How can MRSA be spread?

MRSA can be spread to other people by contact between persons and/or objects by:

- Picking up the bacteria from the environment on the hands.
- Sharing objects between patients without cleaning in between.

People who have been in hospital, rehab facilities or long term care are more at risk of having MRSA germs.

If I have MRSA how can I keep from spreading it?

- **Good hand hygiene** is the single most important thing you can do, especially after using the toilet and before eating.
- Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they enter your room. (15 seconds of soap and running water OR waterless alcohol hand rub until hands are dry).

What will be different about my care?

- Visitors and staff coming into your room will need to wear gloves, yellow gowns and masks to prevent spread to other patients.
- If you leave your room for a procedure, your nurse will show you the proper personal protective equipment to wear. Please clean your hands.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions.

What do I need to do at home?

- MRSA does not usually spread well outside of hospitals. This is because most people who are not in the hospital are healthy and not likely to become infected. Healthy people do not need to worry about getting MRSA.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other health care providers that you have had MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others.

