

## **MRSA**

### **(Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)**

#### **What is MRSA?**

- Staphylococcus Aureus is a common bacteria found on the skin, in the nose or mouth. It may cause infections on broken skin or wounds. It can also cause pneumonia and infections of other body organs. It is also called Staph aureus.
- Methicillin is an antibiotic often used to treat infections caused by Staph aureus. Methicillin resistant means that the infection can't be treated with methicillin or other antibiotics like it.

#### **What is a MRSA infection vs. colonization?**

An **infection** means that germs that are in or on the body are making the person sick. There may be fever, pus from a wound or a high white blood cell count. Some people will have the germs on their skin, in their nose or even their urine but are not sick. This is called **colonization**.

#### **How do people get MRSA?**

People can get MRSA anywhere. The most common way is from:

- Skin to skin contact with someone who has a MRSA infection or is colonized
- Direct contact with person who has a respiratory infection caused by MRSA.
- Touching object or surface contaminated with MRSA.

#### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

Signs and symptoms may vary.

The person may also have a fever.

A colonized person may have no signs and symptoms

#### **How is it treated?**

In some cases, an antibiotic may be given. Be sure to take all of the medicine, even if the infection is getting better, unless your healthcare provider tells you to stop taking it.

#### **What can be done to prevent the spread of MRSA?**

It is important to limit the spread of MRSA.

- **Cleaning hands often is the best way to prevent the spread of MRSA.**
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered.
- Do not share personal items such as toothbrushes, razors, and towels.

Normal social contact is ok unless a person is ill and less able to fight infection.

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## In the hospital

It is very important to help keep germs from spreading to other patients.

- Isolation precautions are used.
- A patient with MRSA must stay in a private room. They will only leave the room for procedures.
- Colonized or infected patients should not have contact with other patients.
- Health care workers coming in the room will wear a gown and gloves and possibly a mask.
- **Everyone** must remember to clean their hands when going into and leaving the room.
- Visitors of the infected patient should not visit other patients.

Before isolation precautions can be stopped there must be three sets of negative cultures at least one week apart while the person is not on antibiotics.

## Where can I get more information about MRSA?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website <http://www.cdc.gov>.
- For specific information as well as follow-up cultures, call your doctor.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**