

Control the Spread of MRSA



MRSA is short for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a type of bacteria that is hard to treat, because it resists treatment with common antibiotics.

HOW DOES MRSA SPREAD?

- You may carry the MRSA germ on your skin or in your nose. Many healthy people do. It does not always make you sick, but some persons who get the germ can get a very serious infection that could threaten life.
- The MRSA germ can live on people, surfaces, or objects for many weeks. Like the common cold, you can pick up the germ by touching someone or something that has MRSA on it and then touching your eyes, nose, or skin. It can also enter your skin through cuts and scrapes.
- The main way MRSA spreads is from patient to patient through human hands, especially healthcare workers' hands.
- MRSA can also infect people in the community. This is usually a mild skin infection with pimples or boils that can be swollen, painful, and drain pus.



WAYS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF MRSA

- Wash your hands often. This helps you not pick up MRSA bacteria and many other germs. It also helps you not spread germs. You can be a carrier of MRSA without having symptoms or feeling ill.
- Keep cuts, scrapes, and wounds clean and covered until healed.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels.
- Clean your hands after touching dirty clothes.
- If you are in the hospital, remind healthcare staff to wash their hands before they touch you.
- When you are in a hospital or community living center, consider having a MRSA test. A nurse gently inserts a cotton swab into your nose. Results tell if you are a carrier. If you are, safety measures can help protect you from getting an infection with MRSA and passing the germ on to others.
- Wash your hands well: Lather hands with soap and water. Rub your palms, the backs of your hands, and in between fingers. Take at least 15 seconds to do this. Rinse hands and dry well.