

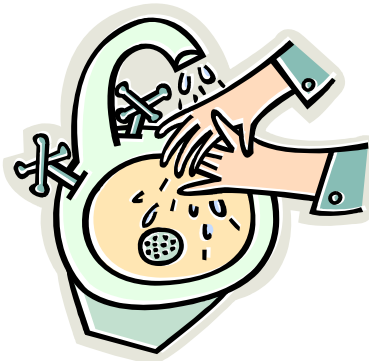
What can people with MRSA do to protect their visitors or family members?

If you have MRSA at the time of discharge from hospital, the chance of spreading it to your healthy family or friends is low. It is acceptable for infants and children to have casual contact with people with MRSA.

If you have MRSA it is recommended that you practice the following at home:

- √ Wash your hands when they are dirty, before and after eating or drinking, and after using the toilet or blowing your nose. Encourage everyone in their house to clean their hands at these times.
- √ Avoid touching open wounds on your body. If you must change a dressing make sure you clean your hands before and after.
- √ Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene, or with going to the toilet, should wash their hands after contact with you.
- √ Towels for drying hands after contact should be used only once.
- √ Do not share towels or personal care items, such as toothbrushes, washcloths or razors with other family members.
- √ Clothing may be laundered in the same manner as the rest of the household laundry.
- √ No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g. dishes) in the home is required. MRSA, as well as many other bacteria, are killed by regular household cleaners and disinfectants.
- √ Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have MRSA, so that they can take additional precautions to help prevent spread.

Hand hygiene decreases the risk of spreading infection. Remind everyone to wash their hands often.



 **CHATHAM-KENT**
Health Alliance

80 Grand Ave.
P.O. Box 2030
Chatham, ON
N7M 5L9

Phone: 519-352-6400 ext. 5093/5257
E-mail: _InfectionControl@ckha.on.ca

Patient Information

 **CHATHAM-KENT**
Health Alliance

METHICILLIN – RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)

“Together we will provide safe, quality patient and family-centered care.”
Chatham-Kent Health Alliance

Phone 519-352-6400
Sheila at ext. 5093
Erika at ext. 5257
Carol at ext. 6481

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ that lives on the skin and mucous membranes of healthy people. Occasionally *S. aureus* can cause an infection. Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA is a strain of *S. aureus* that has developed resistance to multiple antibiotics. MRSA can be detected in the nostrils or rectal area of healthy individuals. Up to 50% of people that carry MRSA can develop skin infections (e.g. boils) or post-op wound infections.

Colonization vs. Infection

Colonization is when MRSA is living on your skin but not making you sick. Many healthy individuals carry *S. aureus* on their skin. You cannot tell when someone is colonized—that's why it is important to test the nostrils and rectal area for MRSA when you are admitted to the hospital. If these areas grow MRSA then that means you are colonized.

Infection is when bacteria get past a person's defenses and cause disease, such as a urinary tract infection, wound infection or pneumonia. The *signs and symptoms* of infection include *fever, pus-like drainage, redness, swelling, and pain*. Infections caused by MRSA are more difficult to treat due to a limited number of antibiotics that can be used.

Colonization does not require treatment.

Infection DOES.

The following people are at the greatest risk of having MRSA:

- People that have had MRSA previously
- Hospital stay in the last 12 months
- Spent time in a Healthcare facility or long term care facility
- Recent exposure
- Home health care services
- Indwelling medical device
- Receive care in intensive care, burn or transplant unit
- Living in a communal setting (shelter or group home)
- History of IV drug use
- Household contact of an MRSA+ patient
- Immunocompromised
- Population where Community Acquired-MRSA is a problem

What Special Precautions are required for MRSA?

If you are found to be a carrier of MRSA, it is important that **CONTACT PRECAUTIONS** are taken to stop the MRSA from spreading to other patients in the hospital, or to other areas on you (e.g. surgical site). These precautions include:

- ✓ A gown and gloves must be worn by everyone who provides **direct care** to you, **including visitors or family members**.
- ✓ You will be required to have clean hands and clean clothing or hospital gown prior to leaving your room for treatment or therapy.
- ✓ While in the hospital you must comply with the hospital's Routine Practice in order to protect yourself and other patients.



How is MRSA Spread?

MRSA is spread by **DIRECT CONTACT** from touching a patient colonized or infected with MRSA or **INDIRECTLY** by touching things in their environment.

Hands are the most common source of transmission.

All healthcare facilities in Ontario are equipped to handle patients with MRSA.



Good hand hygiene practices:

Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they touch you. 15 seconds of soap and running water OR alcohol based hand rub until hands are dry is enough to be effective.

It is very important for you to wash your hands too!



More information about infection prevention and control practices in the hospital is available. Ask your healthcare provider.