

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Patient and Visitor Information

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria that normally lives on the skin and in the mucous membranes (nose, eyes, mouth, etc.) of healthy people. *S. aureus* becomes a concern in the healthcare setting when it develops resistance to certain antibiotics. It is then called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. Every patient at Hanover & District Hospital is checked for MRSA upon admission because the infections caused by this bacteria can be serious and difficult to treat.

How is MRSA Spread?

MRSA can live on hands and objects in the environment. It is spread from one person to another through contact transmission usually on the hands of caregivers. MRSA is transmitted to the caregiver's hands by touching items contaminated by the infected person. This includes towels, sheets, wound dressings, or anything in the affected patient's environment.

What Special Precautions are Required for MRSA?

It is important that special precautions are taken to stop MRSA from spreading to other patients in the hospital. These precautions include:

- ✓ Single room accommodation, if available (the door can remain open)
- ✓ A long-sleeved gown and gloves must be worn by everyone who cares for you
- ✓ A sign will be placed on your door/curtain to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions
- ✓ The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- ✓ Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well using the alcohol based hand sanitizer
- ✓ You must clean your hands before you leave your room

What about Family/Visitors?

Your family and visitors should not assist other patients with their personal care as this may cause spread. If your family/visitors are helping you with direct personal care (i.e. bathing or changing bed linens) they need to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves. Before leaving your room, they must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container located in your room. Then they must clean their hands. All people entering your room need to perform hand hygiene, and when they exit your room they need to perform hand hygiene.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices:

Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they touch you. Ask your nurse or doctor to demonstrate proper hand hygiene techniques (15 seconds of soap and running water OR waterless alcohol hand rub until hands are dry).

You need to clean your hands:

- ✓ After using the bathroom
- ✓ After blowing your nose
- ✓ Before eating and drinking
- ✓ Before and after you touch your dressing or wound
- ✓ When your hands are visibly dirty (soiled)
- ✓ Before you leave your room

What Will Happen at Home?

If you have MRSA at the time of discharge from hospital, the chance of spreading the germ to your family is small. But, we do recommend that you practice the following:

- ✓ Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you.
- ✓ Wash your hands before you make any food and before you eat. This practice should be followed by everyone in the household.
- ✓ Wash your hands well after using the toilet. Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards.
- ✓ 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 home is required.
- ✓ If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a germicidal cleanser
- ✓ Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurse or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others.