

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MSRA)

Information Sheet

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus Aureus (often called “staph”) is a bacterium that lives in the nose and on the skin of about 25 percent of healthy people and 70 percent of the chronically ill. Occasionally, this bacterium can get into the body and cause minor infections, such as pimples or boils, or more serious infections, such as pneumonia. Methicillin is one of the antibiotics normally used to treat such infections. However, this bacterium can develop resistance to Methicillin. In this case, the bacterium is referred to as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MSRA).

How do I get MRSA?

MSRA has been found in hospitals, long term care facilities and in the community. It is mainly spread by contact with unwashed hands. It is not passed through the air.

Who is likely to get MRSA?

Healthy people are at little risk of getting infected with MRSA. The people most likely to get MRSA are hospital or nursing home patients who are elderly or very sick, or who have an open wound on their body.

How can I prevent the spread of MRSA?

- Wash hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and water for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Avoid touching your nose
- If on antibiotics, remember to finish the prescription

How is MRSA treated?

Although MRSA is difficult to treat, a few antibiotics can still cure MRSA infection. An ointment is used nasally and on open areas of the skin. A special soap is used for daily baths, and swabs are repeated at specific times to ensure the bacteria have gone.