

What is Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)?

Your laboratory test was positive for MRSA.

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of staph bacteria that can stop antibiotic medicines from working.

Staphylococcus aureus (staph, for short) bacteria normally live on the skin or in the nose without causing problems. Sometimes, these bacteria learn how to break down the antibiotic, methicillin. This is known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). MRSA can happen when people take antibiotics they do not need or when they take them incorrectly.

In many healthy people, MRSA can live in the body without making the person feel sick. When MRSA does make someone feel sick, the sickness could be in any part of the body.

How is it spread?

- MRSA can be spread from person-to-person by:
 - Unclean hands
 - Sharing personal items
 - Touching contaminated surfaces or equipment
- MRSA is **not** usually spread through the air by coughing or sneezing.

Even if you don't feel sick, you can pass MRSA to others, and they could become sick.

How is MRSA treated?

- You may not need medicine for this. Your care team will decide.
- If medicine is needed, we will give you oral or intravenous (IV) antibiotics.
 - When you get sick because of MRSA, the infection can be hard to treat. This is because your care team has fewer antibiotics to choose from.

How does the hospital prevent infections?

Since hospitals have a lot of very sick people in them, they take extra steps to stop MRSA from spreading to other patients. We will put a "Contact Precautions" sign on your door. This will remind staff of the extra steps to take when they go into your room:



- **Handwashing and alcohol-based hand sanitizer:** We will clean our hands before coming into your room, touching you or leaving your room.



- **Gown and gloves:** We will wear a gown and gloves when we care for you.



- **Cleaning:** We will clean stethoscopes and other instruments before and after each use.

How do I prevent spreading MRSA at home?

To prevent spreading MRSA to others, you and your caregivers should:



- **Clean your hands often.** Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially at these times:
 - Before preparing food
 - Before and after touching wounds
 - After using the bathroom.



- **Clean your bathroom, light switches, doorknobs and countertops often.**
- **Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed.**
 - Don't skip doses. Don't stop taking them, even if you feel better.
 - Don't share your antibiotics.
 - Only take antibiotics if your care team says you need them.

Reminder:

Tell your caregivers (including dentists and home health staff) that you have MRSA. They can take extra steps to protect themselves and others.