

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus MRSA



What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus, also known as golden staph is a common germ/bacteria that lives on the skin or in the nose. MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant or Multi Resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

MRSA is not usually a problem for healthy people and people with MRSA on their skin do not look or feel different from anyone else. However, MRSA can potentially be dangerous if it gets into the body through broken skin, and this can be a problem for patients in hospital, especially after they have had an operation and have a surgical wound. These infections can be treated with special types of antibiotics. How MRSA is spread? In hospitals, MRSA is usually spread to a person through contact with the hands of a person who already has it on their skin. It is not normally spread through the air. You may have acquired MRSA before you came into hospital, or you may have acquired it in hospital. What are the signs and symptoms? Most staph skin infections, including MRSA, appear as a bump or infected area on the skin that may be;

- Red
- Swollen
- Painful
- Warm to the touch
- Full of pus or other drainage
- Accompanied by a fever



How can the spread Of MRSA in Hospitals be prevented?

Western Health hospitals have infection prevention practices in place to address the spread of MRSA. Stopping MRSA spreading between patients in hospital depends on staff, visitors and patients all cleaning their hands well, before and after touching other people.

If a patient in hospital is known to have MRSA either on their skin or causing an infection, special soaps, ointments or antibiotics may be used to try and get rid of the MRSA infection.

The patient may also have a room by themselves, and hospital staff may wear gloves and gowns to reduce the chance of them spreading the MRSA to other

patients. None of these extra measures taken will interfere with the treatment or care received while in hospital.

What about family and visitors of people with MRSA?

MRSA does not harm healthy people including pregnant women, children and babies. Visitors will be asked to wash their hands after visiting and may also be asked to wear a gloves and gown while visiting.

At home, normal hygiene practices such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet is advised.

What Happens If A Person With MRSA Needs Admission To Hospital?

On admission to a Western Health hospital, the computerised record will let staff know if someone has MRSA.

How Can You Prevent The Spread Of MRSA?

The most important thing in preventing the spread of MRSA is to frequently clean your hands using an alcohol based hand rub or wash your hands with soap and water then dry them thoroughly. Avoid touching the part of your body that may have MRSA present, if possible. Follow instructions and advice given by the nurse looking after you on how to manage any wounds or devices. Have your own towels, clothes and bed sheets. If you share a bed with someone, keep sores or wounds securely covered overnight. Have your own grooming items such as nail scissors, tweezers, razors and toothbrushes and don't share with others. All eating utensils, dishes, clothing and linen can be washed as normal.

You Can Help Us Prevent Infections!

Always wash your hands

- Before and after visiting patients
- After contact with blood
- After contact with other body substances
- After removing gloves or other protective clothing

You Can Clean Your Hand By Using Soap And Water

- Wet your hands before you apply soap.
- Rub the soap lather all over your hands.
- Wash all surfaces of your hands and fingers for at least 15-20 seconds. Be sure to get under your nails, around cuticles and between the fingers.
- Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse.
- Pat dry your hands completely using a clean towel.
- Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands



Alcohol hand rubs/gels

These are available throughout all areas at Western Health. Apply a palm full of product in a cupped hand and rub it until it comes in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Rub together until the product dries off.

It is okay for you to remind the Doctor, Nurse or other Healthcare Worker to wash their hands before they touch you.

Contact the Infection Prevention Team

Footscray Hospital
Phone: 03 8345 6783

Sunshine Hospital
Phone 03 8345 0210

Williamstown & Sunbury Day Hospital
Phone 04 19 311 375

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of all people who use the Australian healthcare system. Copies of the charter in community languages are available near the main entrance of all Western Health hospitals, or ask a staff member or volunteer.

For more information, visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights



Author: Infection Control
Date: February 2020
Next Review: February 2023
Version Control: v1



This material has been developed in partnership with Western Health consumers.

