

Points to Remember:

- MRSA can be treated
- Wash your hands :
 1. wet hands under running warm water
 2. apply soap and rub together for at least 15 seconds
 3. rinse with warm running water
 4. dry with a paper towel or hand towel
 5. turn the faucet off using a towel (remember your hands were dirty when you turned the faucet on)
 6. Throw the paper towel in the trash. If you are using a hand towel, do not share it with other people
- Follow the simple steps to controlling the spread of MRSA
- Do not feel that you are alone, talk with your health care professionals about any concerns or questions. You do not need to be restricted from school or work in most cases.

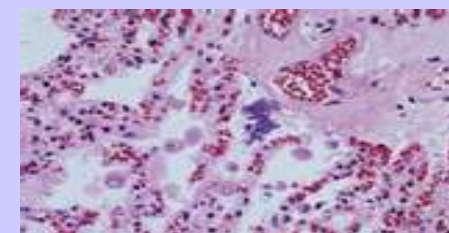


ANSWERS TO



MRSA

(pronounced mer-sa)



**Patient and Visitor
Information**

What is MRSA?

Staph (short for staphylococcus) is a type of bacteria that lives on the skin or nose of healthy people. Most of the time, it is not a problem but sometimes it can cause an infection called MRSA (**M**ethicillin-**R**esistant **S**taphylococcus **A**ureus). MRSA is a type of staph infection resistant to methicillin and some other antibiotics.

Why are you testing me?

MSRH is dedicated to prevent the spread of MRSA and all infections for your safety. We want to identify the bacteria early in your stay.

Who can get MRSA?

Anyone can get MRSA. You can get it the same way you can get a cold, such as by touching someone or something that has the bacteria on it then touching your eyes or nose. There are two ways you can have MRSA:

- Have an **active infection**: An active infection means you have symptoms. The types of symptoms depend on where the bacteria are located. Common active infections are skin infections, such as a boil.
- You can be a **carrier (colonized)**: You do not have symptoms that you can see, but you still have MRSA bacteria living on your skin and in your nose.

Can I increase my chances of getting MRSA?

Yes, there are several ways such as: not washing hands; taking antibiotics a lot; not following directions when taking antibiotics such as stopping early; greater risk if you are recovering from surgery or burns or sharing needles.

What does MRSA look like?

- A “spider bite” (MRSA is not caused by a spider bite)
- A boil- large red painful bumps under your skin
- Impetigo- blisters filled with fluid
- “Turf burn” or abscess



What screening test is used?

We will check for the presence of the bacteria MRSA with a “culture”. A special cotton swab is gently rubbed in your nose and tested. The result will be available in 24 hours.

If needed, we will start “contact isolation” precautions. This helps prevent the spread of MRSA by using gowns and gloves for health-care providers and your visitors. It is important for them to remove these and wash hands prior to leaving the room. **Please** remind everyone entering and leaving your room to **WASH THEIR HANDS**

Controlling MRSA when you go home:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Take a bath or shower every day. This will help reduce the amount of bacteria on your skin
- Laundry and dishes can be done as usual
- Don’t share personal items such as towels, razors and bar soap
- Cover all wounds with a clean, dry bandage taped on all four sides
- Use 60% alcohol based hand gel when soap and water is not available
- If you go to a gym, disinfect all equipment before and after using it
- Change your clothes daily and wash them before wearing again
- No special cleaning procedures are needed. Use any cleaner that has the word “disinfectant” on it. Read the label and follow the directions. Pay attention to items touched such as light switches, doorknobs and phones.
- Take good care of your skin. Remember, MRSA lives on your skin. Any break or crack in your skin can allow it to enter and cause an infection.
- If you have had MRSA in the past, tell your health care providers
- **Take good care of yourself**