

When out of the hospital:

- ◆ Clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub.
- ◆ Take a shower often, be sure to use soap to clean your body while showering.
- ◆ You should have your own bathroom. If you need to share, clean the sink and toilet daily.



- ◆ Do not share towels, wash cloths, razors, or other personal items.
- ◆ If you get a cut or scrape on your skin, clean it with soap and water and then cover it with a bandage.
- ◆ Do not touch sores; if you do touch a sore; clean your hands right away.
- ◆ Cover any infected sores with a bandage and clean your hands right away after putting on the bandage.
- ◆ Wear clothes that cover your bandages and sores, if possible.
- ◆ Clean frequently-used areas of your home (bathrooms, countertops , etc.) daily.
- ◆ Do not participate in contact sports until your sores have healed.

- ◆ Do not go to a public gym, sauna, hot tub or pool until your sores have healed.
- ◆ Change your clothes daily and wash them before wearing again.

- ◆ Wash your sheets and towels at least once a week.



- ◆ When touching your laundry or changing your sheets, hold the dirty laundry away from your body and clothes to prevent bacteria from getting on your clothes.
- ◆ Wear disposable gloves to touch laundry that is soiled with body fluids, like drainage from a sore, urine or feces.
- ◆ Immediately put the laundry into the washer or into a plastic bag until it can be washed.
- ◆ Wash your laundry with hot water, use bleach if possible.
- ◆ Clean your hands after touching dirty sheets or clothing and before touching clean laundry, even if you have been wearing gloves.
- ◆ Throw gloves away after taken them off (do not reuse them) and wash your hands.
- ◆ Put all disposable waste, like bandages, into plastic bags and seal the bags securely. These bags can be thrown out with your regular garbage.
- ◆ If you are going to be admitted in another hospital, it is recommended to mention that you have or had MRSA.

Contact information

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This brochure provides you with general information about the MRSA bacteria and measures the hospital takes for patients with or suspected of having HRMO.

If you have questions after reading this brochure, you can contact your family physician.

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Learning about MRSA

For patients and family



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St. Maarten Medical Center

Introduction

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a staphylococcus (staph) that is resistant to some commonly used antibiotics.

Resistant means that the antibiotic does not work to treat infections caused by that type of bacteria. The MRSA bacteria are not dangerous for healthy persons; most people get rid of them quickly. For an ill person the MRSA bacteria are a risk, because getting an infection is difficult to treat.

Treatment for MRSA depends on the location of the bacteria. It can consist of the application of a nose salve and bathing with disinfecting soap. Sometimes you may receive antibiotics.

At higher risk for MRSA infection, are those:

- ◆ with weakened immune systems;
- ◆ with chronic diseases (such as diabetes and kidney failure);
- ◆ with a history of IV drug use;
- ◆ hospitalized for a long period of time;
- ◆ who had many medical procedures;
- ◆ taking antibiotics for a long time.

MRSA is spread by:

- ◆ Mainly from person to person through touching the skin of an infected person.
- ◆ Drainage from an infected wound can spread MRSA to other parts of the body or to other persons.
- ◆ Touching objects that have MRSA bacteria on the surface and then touching your nose or wound, mouth and other open areas on the body.
- ◆ Using personal items of someone who has MRSA, such as towels or clothes.

Detecting MRSA

Swabs will be taken for culturing from the patient nose, throat, perineum or wound. Sometimes its necessary to take cultures from sputum and urine.

How can you avoid developing MRSA?

Do not overuse antibiotics. Antibiotics must not be used to treat a viral infection.

Take all of the antibiotic medication your doctor prescribes. Do not save some of the antibiotics. Left over antibiotics may not work against bacteria that cause another infection.

Practice hand hygiene: Wash your hands with soap and water. You may use hand-alcohol when your hands are not visibly dirty or sticky.



Precautionary measures are taken for patients:

- ◆ Who were treated in a hospital abroad, less than 2 months ago longer than 24 hours
- ◆ Who are known MRSA carriers
- ◆ Who had in the last 2 months, unprotected contact with a MRSA positive patient
- ◆ Admitted less than 2 months ago shorter

than 24 hours in a hospital abroad and has at least one of the following risk factors:

1. An invasive procedure
2. Chronic infections or persistent skin lesions
3. Infection sources such as abscesses

Isolation

The MRSA carrier or suspected MRSA patient is taken care of in strict isolation.

The MRSA patient is flagged in the hospital information system. If the patient is readmitted a signal would appear immediately in the system and precautionary measures can be taken with the patient.

Visiting is limited to direct family members who should contact a nurse before entering. Persons entering the isolation room will wear protective gear. **Always, when exiting:**

- ◆ Take off and discard gloves in the room
- ◆ Disinfect hands
- ◆ In the ante-room, remove gown first and mask last
- ◆ Before leaving the ante-room disinfect hands again.

After leaving the isolation room, visitors are not allowed to visit other patients.

Termination of Isolation

The isolation measures of the patient in strict isolation for MRSA are terminated when:

- ◆ 3 MRSA test are negative with a minimal interval of seven days.

- ◆ the patient must not be using antibiotics at least 48 hours before collecting the sample for the first MRSA test.
- ◆ the patient does not have a chronic infection or persistent skin lesions

When, in addition to the above, MRSA tests taken two months and minimal one year after the first MRSA test are negative, the 'flag' is removed from the system and **the patient is declared MRSA free.**

Continued medical care

Your attending specialist in the hospital will inform your family physician about you being an MRSA carrier. The nurse will inform the district nursing, if you have home care.

In the outpatient clinic, our staff will take the necessary precautions when attending to you. Also, you will be scheduled for the last appointment of the day.

What can the MRSA patient do to prevent the spread of MRSA?

In the hospital you are allowed to wear your own clothes and use your own toiletries.

Your dirty clothes can be given to your family in a plastic bag. The dirty clothes can be washed in the washing machine in preferably 60 degrees Celsius water or disinfected with bleach (Clorox). When discharged, you must take all your belongings with you.