

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) at home



Information about an antibiotic resistant bacteria

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What is MRSA?

- Bacteria are tiny organisms not visible with the naked eye. Bacteria are everywhere, both inside and outside of your body. Some people call them 'germs'.
- Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria that lives on our skin without causing any harm. Some people call it 'staph'.
- It can sometimes cause small skin infections like boils or spots and occasionally can cause more serious infections like chest and urinary tract infections.
- Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat infection caused by bacteria. They come in many forms, including tablets, capsules, liquids or creams.
- Some types of bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. This means the antibiotics do not control or kill the bacteria and cannot treat the infection.
- Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) means that the 'staph' is resistant to the antibiotic called Methicillin. If you get an infection, your doctor will use a different antibiotic to treat it.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA is spread by contact with infected people or things that are carrying the bacteria. Examples include:

- Sharing personal items, such as towels or razors, that have touched infected skin
- Touching surfaces or items, such as used bandages, that are contaminated with MRSA.

What happens if I have MRSA and am in Hospital?

- Tell your Doctor or Nurse you have MRSA.
- You may be moved to a single room.
- Hospital staff will clean their hands before and after touching you. They will wear an apron and gloves.
- You can leave your room if you feel well enough. Do not visit other patients.
- Wash your hands or clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitiser often and before leaving your room and when returning to your room.
- You can continue to have visitors and have as much contact with them as you like. For example, you can hug and kiss your children.

How can I protect my family from MRSA skin infections?

- Know the signs of MRSA skin infection and get treated early. The infection usually causes a swollen, painful bump on the skin. It may look like a spider bite or pimple with a yellow or white centre. It may be warm to touch or have pus.
- Keep cuts and wounds clean and covered.
- Wash your hands regularly and before or after handling food and after going to the toilet.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors or gym equipment.
- Wash linen and clothes in hot water with extra bleach and dry at high heat in the dryer.
- You can continue to visit and be visited by friends and family. You can go wherever you want to go and do not need to stay at home.



Picture: A persons arm with a MRSA skin infection.

Where can I get more information?

- Infection Prevention & Control team, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, NSW
Telephone: 9382 2519 or 9382 2083
- Visit this website: <https://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/infection-prevention-and-control/multi-drug-resistant-organism-and-emerging-pathogens>
- For translated information visit this website: <https://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/publications/7155>
- Your Doctor or Pharmacist.

