



## **METHICILLIN-RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS*** **Acute Care – Information for Patients and Visitors**

### **What is METHICILLIN-RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS* (MRSA)?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a germ that normally lives in the nose, rectum and on human skin. MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that is not killed by the usual antibiotics.

### **How is MRSA spread?**

Anyone can get MRSA. You can get it by touching someone or something that has the germs on it and then touching your skin or your nose.

### **Are certain people at risk of getting MRSA?**

People most likely to get MRSA are those who:

- Are seriously ill
- Are hospitalized for a long time
- Have taken many antibiotics

### **Does everybody that comes in contact with MRSA become sick?**

No, sometimes the germ lives on the body without causing infection and does not require treatment. This is called colonization. If you have an infection with MRSA you may need specific antibiotics.

### **MRSA..What does this mean for me in the hospital?**

Contact Precautions are necessary to prevent the spread of MRSA in the hospital.

### **How can we stop the spread?**

Contact Precautions will be taken while you are in hospital. Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of this germ. All staff, family members and visitors should wash their hands before entering and when leaving your room. A waterless hand sanitizer is available for use.

- A sign will be posted
- Staff will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care
- You will need to stay in your room/bed space
- Only leave your room as directed by the nursing staff
- You should always wash your hands if you have to leave your room
- MRSA can live on objects in the room so it is important to clean and disinfect items before they are taken out of the room
- In some cases Items required for your daily care will remain in the room. Such items may include a wheelchair, walker, blood pressure cuff, chair and/or food.
- Housekeeping will clean your room on a daily basis as per their policy

### **Can my family and friends come to visit?**

Yes. Things they should do:

- Check with the nurse before entering your room
- Limit visitors to two at a time

- Wash their hands when they enter and when they leave your room
- Follow the directions on the Contact Precautions sign
- Check with staff before bringing any items, including food, into or out of your room
- Ask staff for items from the kitchen and utility room
- Wear gown and gloves if they are helping with your direct care
- Always remove gowns and gloves before leaving your room
- Avoid visiting other patients
- Children under 12 should not visit unless there is a special reason

### **What will happen when I leave the hospital?**

Although the spread of MRSA at home is a very low risk and not likely to occur, the following measures should be taken:

- Handwashing prevents the spread of infection. You and your family should wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- You can return to your normal routine
- Laundry and dishes can be done as usual
- No special cleaning is required
- In most instances no special precautions are required for visitors to your home

If you have a MRSA Infection

- Take antibiotics until they are all gone
- Never give someone antibiotics that have been prescribed for you
- Anyone doing close personal care for you, involving contact with wounds, urine, etc., should wash their hands before and after providing the care
- Do not share personal items such as face clothes, towels, razors, toothbrushes until your infection has been treated

### **ALWAYS REMEMBER....**

- As some people may remain carriers of this germ, we should take precautions during any further visits to health care facilities
- Your history of MRSA will be noted in your health record
- If you go to another doctor or hospital please tell them you were on Contact Precautions for MRSA

Source: Provincial Infection Control (PIC-NL)

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