

MRSA Screening

Information for patients in the Pre-Admission Clinic

Read this brochure to learn about:

- What MRSA is
- How you can get it
- What happens if you have it
- Where to find more information



What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus is a type of bacteria. We find it on the skin and in the nose of healthy people. MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus.

How does MRSA affect people?

MRSA can affect people in different ways. You can have MRSA on your body and not notice it. This is called colonization.

If you are **colonized** with MRSA:

- you have the bacteria on your body
- it does not cause any signs of infection

You can also get an **infection** from MRSA. If you are infected with MRSA:

- the bacteria is in your body tissues
- you have symptoms such as fever and pain

Who can have MRSA?

Anyone can carry MRSA. People are more likely to carry MRSA or get an infection if they have:

- have a weak immune system
- are on antibiotics
- have been in the hospital for a long time
- had medical procedures

Healthy people do not usually become infected with MRSA.

How do people get MRSA?

In the hospital, MRSA spreads through contact. It spreads mostly when people touch:

- patients with MRSA
- doorknobs or other surfaces that have MRSA bacteria on it
- equipment that has MRSA bacteria on it

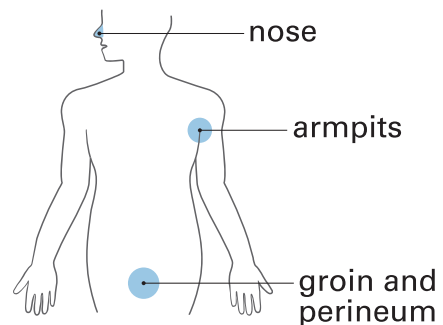
Washing your hands is a simple way to protect against MRSA.

How do I know if I have MRSA?

You will get a test to check for MRSA. We will do this in the Pre-Admission clinic. We will take swabs and test them.

We swab you in these parts of your body:

- nose
- armpits
- groin
- rectum



What happens if I have MRSA?

We will contact you. You may receive medicine to try to treat the MRSA.

Is my family at risk?

Once you have MRSA, you might have it for a long time. By taking precautions, there is a low risk of spreading it to your family.

Healthy people rarely get MRSA infections.

What precautions should I take at home?

To prevent the spread of MRSA at home:

- Everyone in your home should wash their hands often.
- Wash your body regularly with soap and water.
- Wash dishes and laundry as usual. Hot water and dish or laundry detergent clean well enough.
- Clean surfaces such as counters, sinks and cupboards with a soap or disinfectant.

Talk to your doctor if you live with someone who:

- is chronically ill
- is on dialysis or intravenous medicine

Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

If you have questions or concerns about preventing infection:

- ask your nurse to call Infection Prevention and Control



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