

## **Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)**

### **What Is MRSA?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* (*S.aureus*) is a bacteria found on skin and in the nose. Sometimes *S. aureus* gets into the body and causes an infection. The infection can be minor, such as a pimple, or boil. More serious infections are pneumonia, wound infections and bloodstream infections. Methicillin, Oxacillin or Nafcillin are antibiotics that treat infections caused by *S. aureus*. Sometimes, these antibiotics can no longer kill *S. aureus*. This bacteria is referred to as “Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*” or “MRSA.”

### **What Is The Difference Between Being A MRSA Carrier And MRSA Infection?**

- ✓ MRSA can be present on the body without causing illness or infection. This is referred to as being a carrier.
- ✓ MRSA can also make people ill and then they are referred to as being infected with MRSA.
- ✓ People who are carriers or infected with MRSA, can spread the bacteria to other people.

### **Who Gets MRSA?**

Anyone can get MRSA or develop an MRSA infection.

### **How Are MRSA Infections Treated?**

Newer antibiotics, for example Vancomycin, can treat MRSA infection. People, who are carriers of MRSA, do not usually require treatment with antibiotics.

### **How Is MRSA Spread?**

MRSA is spread:

- ✓ By hands or skin contact.
- ✓ By contact with soiled items or surfaces.

### **How Is the Hospital Stay Different for Patients with MRSA?**

Special practices will be used to prevent the spread of MRSA. These practices are called “Contact Precautions”. These precautions include:

- ✓ A private room.
- ✓ Patients with MRSA need to stay in the room.
- ✓ Health care staff will wear gloves and sometimes gowns when giving care.
- ✓ Everyone needs to clean their hands before entering and leaving the room.
- ✓ Alcohol hand rubs or soap and water may be used to clean hands.
- ✓ Signs will be put on the door to remind everyone to follow “Contact Precautions”.
- ✓ Nurses will review any additional precautions with the patient.

## **What Special Things Need to be Done when a Patient with MRSA Goes Home?**

- Patients need to clean their hands after using the toilet and before eating.
- Family members, who help care for the patient, need to clean their hands.
- Hands can be cleaned with soap and water or with an alcohol hand rub.
- Family members need to wear disposable gloves if they handle body fluids (stool, blood, urine, wound drainage) from a person with MRSA.
- Soiled or dirty surfaces need to be cleaned and disinfected with a Lysol like product.
- Launder bedding and clothing soiled with body fluids according to the manufacturer’s directions. Clothes and linen not soiled with body fluids can be washed with other items.
- Put disposable wastes (for example dressing and bandages) into plastic bags. Tie bags securely and place in regular trash.

## **What Can A Patient with MRSA Do To Help Prevent The Spread of MRSA?**

- ✓ Patients with MRSA need to clean their hands before eating and after use of the toilet, sneezing, or touching any drainage on their body. This is the most important thing they can do. Hand cleaning choices include hand washing with soap and water or using an alcohol hand rub.
- ✓ Patients with MRSA need to tell their healthcare providers that they have MRSA. This information is very important so in the event the patient gets an infection, it is treated with the right kind of antibiotic. It will also decrease the risk of the germ being spread to other people.