



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

**What is MRSA and why is it important?** *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a gram positive bacteria resistant to the antibiotic methicillin. MRSA infections typically present as skin infections but in immuno-compromised or hospitalized patients MRSA infections can be severe. MRSA can cause bloodstream infections, pneumonia, and complicated soft tissue infections that significantly contribute to patient morbidity, mortality, and increased healthcare costs. Additionally, it is not uncommon for MRSA to asymptomatically colonize a person's skin and/or nares.

**How is MRSA transmitted?** MRSA is most commonly transmitted directly from person-to-person by contact with infected skin or wound drainage. In some instances MRSA can be transmitted via an object that is shared between persons (e.g. towel, clothing, athletic equipment, bandages).

**What prevention measures are recommended to prevent the transmission of MRSA in a healthcare facility?** Standard precautions are required for all patients in all healthcare facilities. Current guidelines recommend that facilities take additional precautions to control MRSA when logistically feasible. Enhanced prevention measures include:

- Contact precautions – To reduce the probability of contamination of hands and clothing, healthcare providers should gown and glove while caring for MRSA patients.
- Private room – When possible, it is recommended to place MRSA patients in private rooms to prevent spreading MRSA to a roommate.

**Should a patient, student, employee with MRSA be restricted from group activities, school, and/or work?** In most instances, a person known to be infected or colonized with MRSA does not need to be restricted from work, school, or activities. If a person infected with MRSA cannot keep wound drainage well-contained, and/or has poor personal hygiene, they may be restricted from work, school, or activities. If a healthcare worker has been implicated in an outbreak, they also may be restricted from duty.

**Is it required to report cases of MRSA to the health department?** Individual cases of MRSA are not reportable in the State of Michigan. In the event of a suspected outbreak, facilities (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes, and schools) should notify their local public health department. A MRSA 'outbreak' is defined as 3 or more epidemiologically-linked, culture-confirmed cases.

## **Quick Tips:**

- Respiratory MRSA – Standard precautions, as well as contact precautions, should be followed in cases of respiratory MRSA or MRSA pneumonia. If health professionals suspect aerosolization of MRSA, then healthcare workers should be wearing a mask as well as gown and gloves when caring for a patient with a MRSA respiratory infection or pneumonia.
- Room cleaning – A detergent cleaner is sufficient for cleaning rooms of MRSA patients. The use of a dilute 1:10 bleach solution is not required.
- Visitors – Patient visitors should follow the visitor guidelines of the facility. However, in general, visitors of MRSA patients are not required to wear a gown and gloves when in the patient room, unless the visitor is involved in direct patient care.

**References:** <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/definition/index.html>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/pdf/guidelines/MDROGuideline2006.pdf>  
<http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/01/04/cid.ciq146.full.pdf>

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