

Did you know...

- Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to help minimize your risk of infection.
- All visitors should wash their hands before they visit a patient, and when they leave. Waterless hand wash is located on the walls in all areas of the Hospital.
- You will notice that health care providers wash their hands frequently. This very important aspect of health care helps to prevent the spread of infection.

Final Words

- If you have any questions please speak to your doctor, nurse or call Infection Control.



**Wash your hands
often and well.**

For more information...

This information sheet has been prepared by Mount Sinai Hospital's Infection Control Department.

For more information,
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Department of Infection Control

Special Isolation Precautions After Contact with Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)

Information for patients
and visitors



You have had contact with a person who has an antibiotic resistant germ called MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). Staff must now make some changes in your care. That means special precautions will be used when taking care of you to prevent the germs from being passed on to other patients.

What is MRSA?

- *Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria that normally lives in the nose, rectum and on human skin. It does not usually cause any harm.
- MRSA is a strain of *Staphylococcus aureus* that is not killed by the usual antibiotics.

Can MRSA be harmful?

- MRSA germs are not harmful to healthy people, but can cause infection for those who are seriously ill.
- MRSA does not cause more serious infections than other germs, but it is more difficult to choose the right antibiotic to treat it. Therefore, it is important to know if someone has MRSA so we can treat it.

Who might have MRSA?

- People who have been in hospital, rehab facilities, or long-term care are more at risk of having MRSA germs.

I have had contact with MRSA. What does this mean for me?

- To make sure you do not have MRSA, we will ask you for three sets of nasal and rectal swabs for testing.
- A nurse or doctor will do a nasal or rectal swab by inserting a Q-tip gently into both nostrils or the outer part of the rectum so that a sample of the germs in that area can be studied. If you have any wounds, these may also be tested.
- Since you have been exposed to a person who has the MRSA germ, staff will use special precautions when caring for you until MRSA is ruled out. You will likely be moved into a private room. Staff will wear yellow gowns, gloves and masks. A sign will be hung on your door to indicate the type of precautions required.
- If the tests come back “negative” (meaning you did not get the germ), precautions will not be needed anymore.

What about family and visitors?

- You may still have visitors. They must wash their hands when they come in and when they leave your room. They do not need to put on gowns, gloves or masks if they do not look after other sick people.

What will happen when I leave the Hospital?

- If you go to another health care facility or if you have services from Home Care, before your test results are in, some precautions may be taken. Meanwhile, we will arrange to finish up all your tests to determine if you have MRSA.

What about at home?

- MRSA does not spread well outside of hospitals. This is because most people who are not in the hospital are healthy and not likely to become infected. Healthy people do not need to worry about getting MRSA.
- **Hand washing decreases the risk of spreading infection. Remind everyone to wash their hands often.**



We understand that some of these precautions can feel uncomfortable. Because some of our patients are very ill, we have to be very careful. We appreciate your help and patience.