What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that causes "staph" infections, ranging from minor skin infections, "pimple-like" red bumps or boils sometimes mistaken as a "spider bite", to more serious infections, like pneumonia. But, MRSA infections can't be treated with antibiotics commonly used to treat non-resistant or sensitive "staph" infections. Healthcare providers may diagnose a MRSA infection by taking a culture of the infected site, if pus or an abscess is present.

How does MRSA spread?

MRSA usually spreads from person to person through hands or close, skin-to-skin contact. Drainage from an infected wound can spread MRSA to other parts of the body or to other persons. MRSA can live on the skin and survive on some surfaces for prolonged periods of time. MRSA can live on skin and in the nares (nose) without causing an infection. This is called "colonization." A patient who obtains a new MRSA colonization during a hospital stay has an increased risk to develop a MRSA infection following discharge or in future hospital admissions.

Risk Factors for MRSA

- Close skin-to-skin contact
- Touching contaminated items or surfaces
- Crowded living conditions (such as military training camps, child care centers, or institutional settings)
- Inadequate personal hygiene
- Openings in the skin, like cuts or abrasions
- Hospitalization, surgery, or dialysis
- Indwelling medical devices, like a catheter or IV
- Living in a long-term care or rehabilitation facility
- Close contact sports/athletics

How is MRSA Treated?

Antibiotics are not always needed to treat MRSA skin infections. Sometimes, a healthcare provider only needs to open and drain the wound. The wound should be cleaned often and kept covered to prevent spreading the infection. Other times, antibiotic treatment is required to treat a MRSA infection. There are very few antibiotics that treat MRSA. Some of these antibiotics are not made as pills and are only given by IV. A healthcare provider may culture the infected site, which can help to select the appropriate antibiotic for treatment. Serious or invasive MRSA infections may require hospitalization for treatment.

Before some surgical procedures, a healthcare provider may also obtain a culture of the nose to see if a patient may be colonized with MRSA. If the culture is positive for MRSA, the patient may receive an antibiotic ointment to remove MRSA from their nose, which may help decrease the risk of infection during or after surgery.

How can I avoid getting or spreading MRSA?

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after touching wounds or bandages
- Do not share personal items, like towels, bar soap, wash cloths, razors, or clothing – even among family members
- Seek care immediately at first signs of infection (red, swollen, painful, warm, draining pus)
- Keep wounds clean and covered with a dry bandage, especially if the wound is draining
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper wound care
- Throw away soiled bandages
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
- Wash clothes, towels, and sheets in water with laundry detergent at hottest suitable temperature. Add bleach, if desired (check label instructions). Dry in a dryer at the hottest suitable temperature.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch or soiled surfaces (for example, door knobs and phones frequently, and shared sports equipment between uses) according to item label cleaning instructions.

Clean hands are the single most important factor in preventing the spread of dangerous germs. Wash hands with soap and water, and scrub for at least 15 seconds.

If wound drainage cannot be fully contained under a bandage, avoid close contact with others (work, school, sports activities) to prevent spreading MRSA.

MRSA: What you should know

- MRSA is a type of bacteria that can cause skin infections as well as other types of infections
- Many antibiotics do not treat MRSA because it is resistant
- MRSA can live on skin and in the nares (nose) without causing an infection. This is called "colonization"
- Before some surgical procedures, you may be tested to see if you are colonized with MRSA
- MRSA usually spreads from person to person through hands or close, skin-to-skin contact, touching contaminated surfaces, or sharing personal items or shared sports equipment

What you can do if a MRSA infection is present:

- ✓ **Keep wounds clean and bandaged until healed**
- ✓ **Avoid sharing personal items, like towels, wash cloths, bar soap, and razors, even among family members**
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, shared items, and equipment per manufacturer's instructions**

Safe and Smart Antibiotic Use

- ✓ **Antibiotics are not always needed for MRSA skin infections. Do not pressure your healthcare provider to prescribe antibiotics, as they can sometime cause more harm than good.**
- ✓ **If you are prescribed antibiotics take them as prescribed. Do not share them or save them. Using an antibiotic the wrong way can make infections stronger and harder to treat.**

Learn More:

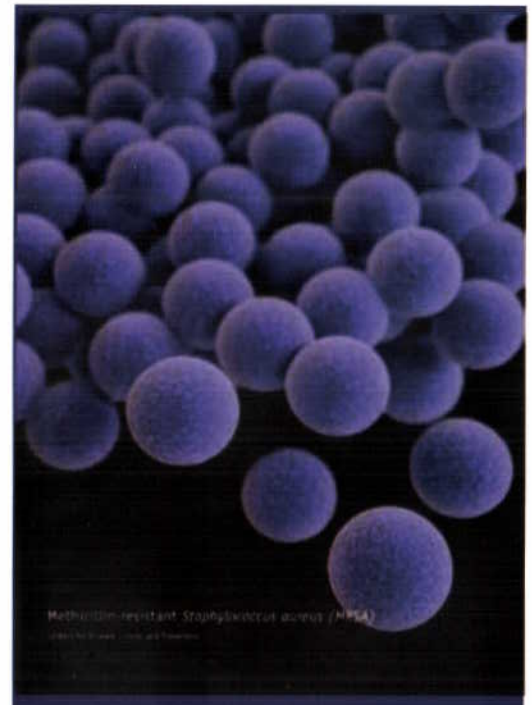
www.michigan.gov/hai

www.mi-marr.org

www.cdc.gov/MRSA

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

MARR Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition



MRSA:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR | NICK LYON, DIRECTOR

Methicillin-Resistant
Staphylococcus aureus