

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

What is MRSA and, more importantly, how do I keep from getting it?

MRSA is a type of staphylococcus or “staph” bacteria resistant to many antibiotics. “Staph” bacteria, like other kinds of bacteria, normally live on your skin and in your nose, usually without causing problems. MRSA is different from other types of staph because it cannot be treated successfully with certain antibiotics.

MRSA, like all staph bacteria, can be spread from one person to another through casual contact or through contaminated objects. It is commonly spread from the hands of someone who has MRSA. This could be anyone in a health care setting or in the community.

MRSA is usually not spread through the air like the common cold or flu virus, unless a person has MRSA pneumonia and is coughing.

MRSA used to infect people who had chronic illnesses, but now MRSA is becoming more common in healthy people. These infections can occur among people who are likely to have cuts, wounds, abrasions and who have close contact with one another, such as members of a sports team or people in the military.

MRSA can live outside the human body in damp towels, on handles and door knobs, on exercise mats, and everywhere you think of. If you have a scrape, a wound, an abrasion, or a cut, it must be covered with a clean, dry dressing at all times.

Washing your hands frequently with soap and water, being sure to lather the soap, will help you avoid contamination from germs, bacteria, viruses, “staph,” etc., that cause many infections. Running your hands under the water faucet does not count. If you are out in the field, use an alcohol based sanitizer.

Be cautious of all things you touch; i.e., door knobs, handles, mats, any items that are shared by others. Do not use personal hygiene items that have been used by others; i.e., razors, combs, toothbrushes, towels, wash cloths, manicure scissors.

If you are in area where equipment must be shared, use Lysol wipes, or a similar product, before and after you use the equipment. Keep everything as clean as possible - items you use, your hands, and any wounds, cuts, or abrasions.

Go to www.webmd.com and search for MRSA to read a lot more worthwhile information.