

## WHAT ABOUT WHEN I AM AT HOME?

At home, other than frequent handwashing and not sharing personal items, family members do not need to take any special precautions. Carry on with your usual activities but remind everyone to wash their hands often.

Wash your hands before meals, after using the toilet, and after touching or blowing your nose.

Handwashing should be done routinely, not just for MRSA.

**HAND HYGIENE  
THE BEST  
WAY TO PREVENT  
INFECTION**



Special care must be paid to hand hygiene as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

### **GOOD HAND HYGIENE INCLUDES:**

#### **Alcohol-Based Hand Rub**

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

#### **Hand Washing**

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. Dispose of paper towel in the garbage.

**IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS  
AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS  
IF THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR HANDS.**

**REMIND VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR  
HANDS.**



## **METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA) INFECTION IN LONG-TERM CARE & MENTAL HEALTH**

**Information for Clients,  
Residents, Families, and  
Visitors**

**INFECTION PREVENTION  
& CONTROL PROGRAM**  
[www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)

## **WHAT IS METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* (Staph) is a bacterium commonly found on the skin and in the noses of healthy people.

Staph bacteria that have developed resistance to most antibiotics that are used to kill it including an antibiotic named methicillin, are known as Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA).

MRSA *colonization* is the presence of the bacteria on the body which does not cause any signs or symptoms of infection.

MRSA *infection* is the presence of the bacteria in or on the body which causes signs and symptoms of infection.

### **I HAVE MRSA, WILL I BECOME SICK?**

Often, MRSA lives on the body without causing infection and does not require treatment. If you have an infection with MRSA, you will need special antibiotics.

### **WHO IS AT RISK OF GETTING MRSA?**

Individuals most at risk to get MRSA are those who:

- Are seriously ill.
- Are hospitalized for an extended period of time.
- Have taken many antibiotics.

## **HOW IS MRSA SPREAD?**

It is spread on individual's hands or on equipment that have not been cleaned appropriately between each use.

### **HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF MRSA:**

To prevent the spread of MRSA to other individuals, the following precautions need to be taken:

- When leaving your room, always wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet, touching or blowing your nose, and before you eat. If you have trouble washing your hands, ask for help.
- It is important that all staff and visitors wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub when they enter your room and when they leave. Do not be shy about reminding everyone to clean their hands.
- Staff will wear a gown and gloves when caring for you. Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) helps protect staff and other individuals.
- All items and surfaces in the room should be cleaned on a regular basis.
- In some cases, the equipment used in your daily care will remain in your room and will not be shared with other clients/residents.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY:**

Special precautions will be taken when you have an MRSA infection. These include, but are not limited to:

- A Contact Precautions sign will be posted on your door. You may be required to stay in your room.
- Before you leave your room, perform hand hygiene.
- Do not visit other inpatient units.
- Do not visit the kitchen area.
- Staff and visitors will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care.
- All staff and visitors must clean their hands when they enter or leave your room.
- Items brought into your room must stay in the room (i.e., equipment, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.) chairs and food.