

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Patient/Parent or Caregiver Information

What is MRSA?

MRSA is short for *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria (bug or germ) that about 30% of us carry on our skin or in our body as part of our normal bacteria.

MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* that has adapted with a defence mechanism so some common antibiotics don't work against it any more. This is called **resistance**.

How does someone get colonised with MRSA?

A person can get MRSA in the community as well as in hospitals and other healthcare facilities. It is mainly spread by direct skin to skin contact, although it can also be spread by contaminated equipment and other objects.

MRSA may not cause any problems if the person is well, but it may be a problem if an infection develops. The following factors may make you or your child more vulnerable to infection:

- Underlying medical condition
- Skin sores or open wounds
- Having any tubes or drains such as an intravenous (IV) line.

Breaks in the skin allows the MRSA bug or germ to cause an infection and sometimes problems with wound healing. Infections with MRSA can range from simple skin infections such as pimples or boils, to more serious infections in wounds, or in the blood stream.

What happens if me or my child has MRSA?

If you or your child has an infection caused by MRSA, you or your child will be assessed individually and any plans for treatment discussed with you.

What happens in the hospital?

People in hospitals and other healthcare facilities are more prone to getting MRSA due to illness, surgery, medications (especially antibiotics) and procedures that weaken the body's defence mechanisms.

In hospitals, special precautions may be used to reduce the risk of spread.

Do we need to take any precautions at home, day care, kindy or school?

Good basic general personal hygiene such as cleaning hands before eating and after going to the toilet, and using separate towels is recommended. Regular household cleaning is fine. There are no additional things you need to do.

Do we need to inform anyone?

Please advise your GP, specialist, nurse or Plunket nurse that you or your child has had MRSA. This will help your healthcare professional to choose the right antibiotics if you need treatment for an infection.

If there is anything else you wish to know, please ask the staff caring for you or your child