

Multi-drug resistant organism (MDRO)

Patient/Parent-Caregiver Information

What is MDRO?

MDRO is short for multi-drug resistant organism. These are types of bacteria (germs) that stop some antibiotics from working. This means the standard antibiotics don't work so well any more. This is called resistance.

MDRO are usually detected through routine tests or specimens. If you have an MDRO and it is not causing you any ill effect, this is called colonisation.

Most of the time MDRO bacteria live harmlessly in the body. Occasionally, they cause an infection e.g. in a wound or around a medical device (tube or drain).

How does someone get an MDRO?

This can be from close contact with other people who have an MDRO or from touching surfaces that are contaminated and then touching themselves without having washed their hands.

It can also be picked up in hospitals and other healthcare facilities where people are sick and vulnerable to infection.

MDRO is usually not spread through the air by coughing or sneezing.

How serious are MDRO infections?

Infections caused by MDRO are different because some of the standard antibiotics do not work against it.

This means that non-standard antibiotics are needed to treat the infection.

What happens if me or my child has MDRO?

If you or your child is colonised with or carrying an MDRO, it does not automatically mean treatment is needed.

If MDRO is causing an infection, you or your child will be assessed individually and any plans for treatment discussed with you.

What happens in hospital?

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

In hospitals, special infection prevention and control precautions may be used to reduce risk of spread.

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

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

Do we need to inform anyone?

It is important to let your healthcare providers know if you or your child has had MDRO so they can provide appropriate care and treatment.

Please advise your GP, midwife, nurse or Plunket nurse that you or your child has MDRO. This will help your healthcare professional to treat an infection with the right antibiotics.

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