



Patient information – MRSA in the community

What is staph?

- Staphylococcus aureus (commonly known as staph) are common bacteria.
- Many healthy people carry staph on their skin or in their nose.
- Staph are usually harmless, but sometimes they can cause infection and serious illness.

What is MRSA?

- Staph infections are treated with antibiotics. One of the antibiotics is called methicillin.
- When you are told you have MRSA, this means that the “staph” is resistant to some antibiotics (such as methicillin). This means the antibiotic doesn't work on these types of staph. These staph are known as methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).
- Some people call MRSA infection "golden staph".
- MRSA can sometimes cause small skin infections like boils or spots and occasionally can cause more serious infections.
- If you get an infection your doctor will use a different antibiotic to treat it.

What happens if I have MRSA?

In hospital:

- We will clean our hands before and after touching you.
- We will wear an apron and gloves.
- We might move you to a single room if one is available.
- We will ask you to clean your hands often - especially before leaving your room and when returning to your room.
- You can continue to have visitors and have as much contact with them as you like e.g. hug and kiss your children.
- You can leave your room if you feel well enough, but please don't visit other patients.



At home:

- You do not need to do anything special or different.
- You can share things like plates, cups, sheets and towels as normal.
- You can continue to visit and be visited by friends and family.
- You are free to go wherever you want to go.

If I have MRSA who should I tell?

If you have MRSA you should tell:

- Your doctor / GP
- The hospital (if you are admitted)
- Your community nurse (if you have one)

Acknowledgements:

References: SESLHD and ISLHD IMACS resources

Related Policies/Procedures

NSW Ministry of Health
PD2007_036 Infection Control Policy

Further information:

- Ask for the brochure **Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) consumer factsheet** developed by the NHRMC and ACSQHC (Nov 2010).