

Learning about MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph aureus)

• Downloadable Brochure

- Learning About MRSA

A Guide for Patients and Families

What is Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply as "staph," is a kind of bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nose of healthy people.

Sometimes, staph can get into the body and cause an infection. These infections can be minor (such as skin infections), or more serious, even life-threatening (such as bloodstream infections or pneumonia). Staph has been causing infections for many years but recent changes in this organism have caused growing concern.

Then what is MRSA?

MRSA is Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

Many bacteria, including Staph, have developed strains that are now resistant to the antibiotics that healthcare providers use to treat infections. MRSA is a type of Staph that is resistant to many antibiotics. This means clinicians have fewer choices of medications that can effectively treat an infection caused by MRSA.

MRSA was first identified in the 1960s and was mainly seen among patients in hospitals and nursing homes. In the late 1990s however, a new type of MRSA was identified. This "community acquired" MRSA is different than the hospital strain. This type of MRSA is being seen more often in children and adults who have never been sick before.

The symptoms of MRSA depend on where you're infected. Most often, it causes mild infections on the skin, causing pimples or boils. It also causes more serious skin infections or infected surgical wounds, the blood stream, lungs or the urinary tract. Many MRSA infections can become life-threatening. Many public health experts are alarmed by the spread of the tough strains of MRSA. Because MRSA is very hard to treat, it is called the "superbug". Staph are common bacteria that can live on our bodies. Staph can become a problem if it manages to get into the body, for instance through a cut. Once there, it can cause an infection that can most likely spread rapidly throughout the body.

Staph can be treated with very strong antibiotics, but over the years some strains of staph, like MRSA have become resistant to the antibiotics that once destroyed it. MRSA is now immune to methicillin, amoxicillin, penicillin, oxacillin and many other antibiotics. Yes, some antibiotics continue to work, however MRSA is adapting to everything thrown at it. Researchers developing new antibiotics are having a difficult time keeping up.

Those with the following medical conditions are at risk:

- those with weakened immune systems (for example: people with malignancies or undergoing chemotherapy, people who are HIV positive, people taking medicine to prevent transplant rejection)
- those who have chronic diseases, like diabetes, emphysema, or who are on dialysis
- people who have been hospitalized often or for long periods of time
- those who have had many medical procedures
- those who have taken antibiotics frequently or for a long time
- People who have open cuts that go unprotected.

Other people in certain settings are also at increased risk:

- athletes and people who participate in sports, especially those in which abrasions frequently occur (for example football, soccer and wrestling)
- physical fitness gyms
- locker rooms
- residential homes
- commercial property
- people who live in group environments like nursing homes, prisons, or dormitories
- people who use IV drugs

But remember. . .people with no obvious risk factors can still get infections caused by community-acquired MRSA.

How is MRSA identified?

Laboratory tests are used to identify MRSA. Tests can be done using a blood or urine sample, or a swab from a wound or other body site.

Even if you don't have an active MRSA infection you may be tested to see if you carry MRSA. This is called 'screening for MRSA' and might be done on admission to the hospital or prior to having a medical procedure, like surgery. The screening usually involves swabbing your nose. The lab will check the swab for MRSA.

How is MRSA treated?

If you suspect you might have MRSA, consult a healthcare professional. It is important to follow any instructions your healthcare provider gives you. Make sure you complete any medication that is prescribed. Also, be sure to cover, and care for any wounds following the instructions given by your clinician.

If you have an active MRSA infection, your doctor may choose one or more of the following treatments:

- Prescribe antibiotics
- Drain the wound
- Reduce the amount of MRSA in your nose or on your skin by using special soaps or an ointment in your nose

Will I always have MRSA?

Many people can be treated effectively and infections will heal. However, sometimes MRSA goes away after treatment but then comes back again. You may also remain colonized in your nose even after completing antibiotic treatment. Your healthcare provider can help you identify the reasons this may be happening.

Contact your doctor if you're being treated for an MRSA infection and:

- you have any new symptoms, such as a fever
- the infection gets worse
- the infection is not healing
- Or, if you have any questions.

What are we doing to prevent the spread of MRSA around the Central Florida Area?

Commando Carpet Cleaning has set in-place a very affordable pricing plan that will fit everyone's budget. Our dedication to help stop the spread of this horrific superbug is astronomical and we are willing to make enormous sacrifices to make our services affordable and to defeat this superbug that has already claimed so many lives that probably could have been prevented.

Commando Carpet Cleaning will come into your home or office and provide your family or customers with the most thorough cleaning with one of the few chemicals used and able to kill the superbug or other forms of bacteria. Rest assured that the chemicals used are totally safe for the entire family and pets.

Starting from the top leaving no areas of your home un-cleaned, then finishing up the entire process with having your carpets steamed cleaned with hot steam and special chemicals used to kill all bacteria including MRSA in your carpets. Then working our way to you upholstery and then finishing up with having your tile and grout cleaned and sealed.

If you wondering and asking questions that this is a lot of cleaning and it probably is expensive, you can be rest assured that Commando Carpet Cleaning is more interested in helping control this horrific superbug that most likely lead to an epidemic in the very near future if not controlled now. Commando Carpet Cleaning guarantees to provide affordable pricing for everyone.

What can you do at home to reduce the chance of spreading MRSA?

You can prevent spreading MRSA infections to others by following these steps:

Clean your hands. The person with MRSA, family members living in the household, and all others in close contact should clean their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Both soap and water and the alcohol gels are very effective in eliminating MRSA on your hands. You can safely hug people, shake hands, and be around others ... just be sure hands are cleaned frequently and that wounds are kept covered to reduce the possibility of transferring the organism to others.

Cover your wound. Keep wounds, especially those that are draining or have pus, covered with clean, dry bandages. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds may contain MRSA, so keep the area covered to prevent the spread of germs to your environment and to others. Soiled tape and bandages should be placed in a plastic bag and then can be thrown away with the regular household trash. Be sure to clean your hands after changing bandages.

Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors or clothing. These items may have become contaminated with MRSA and could pass the germ on to others.

Do your laundry. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with warm/hot water and laundry detergent. Use bleach if possible. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill germs. Clean your hands after touching soiled bedding or clothing.

Clean your house. Cleaning your home yourself will not do it. Commando Carpet Cleaning has state of the art equipment and chemicals to eliminate and kill this super bug. By giving your home a through detailed cleaning and having regular maintenance cleanings will ensure your best possible defense against this super bug in your home.

If you are concerned and have suspicion that your home or office is MRSA infected then odds are it is. Commando Carpet Cleaning has teamed up with one of the most advanced microbiological testing Professionals that are FDA registered and approved to provide testing and feedback if your home is infected with the superbug MRSA

Things to remember if you have MRSA:

- clean your hands often
- take care of yourself - eat right, exercise, quit smoking and avoid stress
- take good care of your skin
- keep infections covered to avoiding spreading MRSA to others
- tell all other healthcare providers that you have had MRSA
- talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns

Remember that frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent spreading any infection.

For more information on MRSA. . .

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, GA

www.cdc.gov

This information was adapted from several sources including:

"Living with MRSA" produced by the Washington State Dept. of Health

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