

Here's how you can protect your family and others from MRSA...

AT HOME:

1. Wash/clean your hands before and after you care for yourself or others who have **MRSA**.
2. Tell family members and others in close contact to wash/clean their hands.
3. Wash/clean your hands before holding or feeding a child.
4. Always cover wounds or skin lesions with clean dry bandages. Wash/clean hands and put on clean disposable gloves:
 - To change bandages
 - To clean a wound
 - To touch a wound or a dirty bandage

After caring for a wound:

- Remove gloves so they are inside out.
 - Do not touch the outside of the gloves.
 - Make sure gloves are disposed of carefully.
 - Never touch the used gloves after they are off your hands.
 - **Wash/clean hands again.**
5. Do not share towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or other personal items.
 6. Clean rooms and personal items daily. You can use a store-bought disinfectant

(cleaner) or make your own. (1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart of water):

- Wash soiled linens and clothes with regular laundry detergent.
- Wash utensils and dishes as usual, with dish detergent and hot water. Use a dishwasher if you can.



Infection prevention – It's in your hands!

The VA helps to prevent MRSA spread in hospitals and nursing homes.

As an **MRSA** carrier, you need to know that the VA will:

- Place veterans who test positive for **MRSA** in a private room or with other patients who have the same germ.
- Give antibiotics for **MRSA** only to patients who have symptoms and are sick with **MRSA** or who have surgery. This is to prevent **MRSA** from becoming resistant to current treatments.

For more information, contact:

MRSA in the Hospital and at Home - July, 2007

MRSA

Methicillin-Resistant
Staphylococcus aureus

What to do when you have MRSA: In the Hospital and at Home



**Infection Prevention:
It's in your hands**

Department of
Veterans Affairs



MRSA in the hospital and at home

What is MRSA?

MRSA is Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a resistant germ that could make you very ill. It is difficult to treat because common antibiotics don't work. It can keep you in the hospital longer. When you have **MRSA**, you can pass it to others without knowing it.



Who can get MRSA?

Anyone can get **MRSA**, but you are more at risk:

- If you are over age 65.
- If you have a chronic disease like diabetes, cancer, or heart disease.
- If you have a break in your skin – from surgery, sores, scrapes, or burns.
- If you have any tubes in your body, fresh surgery wounds or openings in your skin.
- If you are in a crowded place like a hospital, nursing home, or day care.

How did I get MRSA?

Anyone can get **MRSA**. You can get this germ the same way you can get the common cold. This means touching someone or something that has **MRSA** on it and then touching your eyes, nose or skin.

You can get **MRSA** if you:

- Touch the skin, nose, or hands of someone who has **MRSA**.
- Use the personal items of someone who has **MRSA**, like razors, toothbrushes, towels, etc.

MRSA can live on people, surfaces and items for a while – days to weeks. However, you can kill **MRSA** by using effective cleaning methods.

YOU can avoid passing MRSA to others by:

Washing/Cleaning Your Hands!

- **Hand washing/cleaning is the most important thing you can do to avoid spreading MRSA to others.**
- **Remind others to wash/clean their hands.**

Everyone can work to prevent infection!

How can I help stop MRSA from spreading to others?

IN THE HOSPITAL

1. Protect yourself and others by telling all your health care providers that you are a **MRSA** carrier, especially before you have surgery.
2. Wash/clean your hands:
 - Hand washing/cleaning is the easiest way to prevent **MRSA** from spreading.



It's okay to ask health care providers if they have cleaned their hands.

- Use the antimicrobial soap or the alcohol hand cleaner in your room and found throughout the hospital.
 - Wash/clean your hands as you leave and enter your room.
3. Make your room into a "clean space":
 - Wash/clean your hands before and after all group activities: physical therapy, exercise, poker and bingo games, etc.
 4. If you use a wheelchair:
 - Wash/clean your hands often
 - If you use wheelchair gloves, wash/clean them every day.

