

There are two ways to wash/clean your hands:

1. Wash with soap and water when your hands look or feel dirty:

- Make lather with soap and warm water.
- Rub palms, back of hands, and between fingers.
- Rub for at least 15 seconds.
- Rinse and dry well.



2. Use the hand cleaner with alcohol when your hands do not look or feel dirty:

- Follow directions on the cleaner for the amount of cleaner to use and how long to rub. Use enough hand cleaner to cover both sides of your hands. Ask the hospital staff for help if you do not understand the directions.
- Rub the cleaner on the palms, back of hands, and between fingers. Keep rubbing until your hands are dry.



The VA is working to stop MRSA! You will see VA health care workers:

- Wash/clean their hands before and after caring for every patient.
- Wear gloves and gowns when caring for patients with **MRSA**.
- Place patients who test positive with **MRSA** in a private room or with other patients who have the same germ.

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

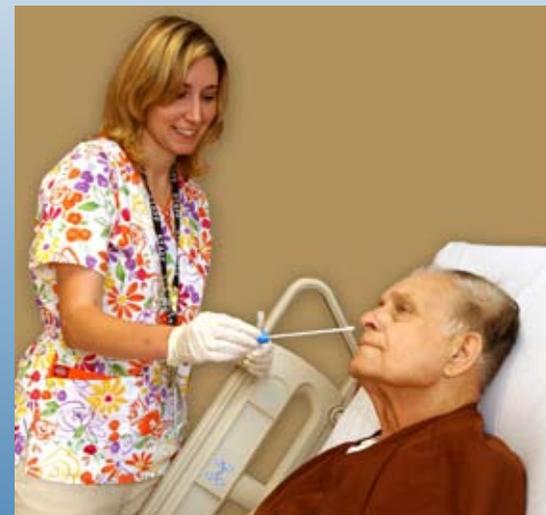
For more information about this test, please contact:

MRSA: Testing - July, 2007

MRSA

Methicillin-Resistant
Staphylococcus aureus

Testing for MRSA



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

 Department of
Veterans Affairs



Why is the VA Testing You for the MRSA Germ?

The VA is testing you for MRSA because this germ can spread from person to person and may make you very ill.

MRSA is **M**ethicillin-**R**esistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. **MRSA** can be difficult to treat and common antibiotics don't kill it.

You can get **MRSA** when you touch items that have **MRSA** on them. You can also get **MRSA** from direct contact with people who have **MRSA**.

You can pass these germs from your hands to your nose, skin, and other people. You can also pass **MRSA** from your hands by touching common household items.



You can carry **MRSA** and pass it on to others even though you may have no outward symptoms yourself. But if **MRSA** gets into an open wound, for example, it can make you very ill.

Reminder!



When you have MRSA on your body, even if you do not appear ill, you can still pass it on to others!

HOW is the MRSA test done?

You will have a cotton swab carefully inserted into your nose. It does not hurt but it may tickle.



WHEN will the test results be ready?

Your test may take up to two days for the lab to process. The VA may repeat your test several times to see if it changes. When the lab finds **MRSA** germs on your swab, your test is **positive**. Staff will notify you if your test result is **positive**.

WHAT if the results are negative?

Always wash/clean your hands the right way at the right time (even if your test is **negative**). Washing/cleaning your hands protects you from **MRSA** and hundreds of other germs.

WHAT if the results are positive?

A positive test result means:

- **MRSA** is in your body.
- You are a "carrier" of the **MRSA** germ.
- You may not have any symptoms.
- You can pass **MRSA** on to other people.
- In some cases, the **MRSA** germ on your body may go away on its own.
- You can prevent the spread of **MRSA** by washing/cleaning your hands.
- The VA will treat you for **MRSA** if you are sick or have surgery.

Note: No matter what your test result: Wash/clean your hands!

