Preventing MRSA infections IN THE HOSPITAL

YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS will do these things:

• Test you for MRSA if they think you’re at risk. The test involves rubbing a cotton swab in your nostrils or on your skin.
• Clean their hands with soap and water or with hand sanitizer before and after caring for each patient (see page 2).
• Clean all hospital rooms and medical equipment carefully and often.
• Put you in a private room whenever possible.
• Wear gloves and a protective gown over their clothing while caring for you.

YOU can do these things:

• Make sure all healthcare providers clean their hands before and after caring for you (see page 2).
• Stay in your hospital room as much as possible. Don’t go into common areas such as the gift shop or cafeteria. (You may go to other areas of the hospital for treatment or tests.)

VISITORS TO YOUR ROOM can do these things:

• Wash their hands thoroughly when entering and leaving your room (see page 2).
• Ask a healthcare provider about wearing a protective gown or gloves while visiting you.
• Relax. The chance of getting MRSA while visiting you is very low.
Preventing MRSA infections AT HOME

- Take all medicines for MRSA exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Don’t take half-doses, and don’t stop before you complete your prescribed medicine.
- Wash your hands often, especially before and after changing your wound dressing or bandage (see instructions below).
- Make sure people who live with you wash their hands often as well.
- Keep any wounds clean, and change bandages as instructed until they’re healed.
- Don’t share personal items such as towels or razors.
- Wash and dry your clothes and bed linens in the warmest temperatures recommended on the labels.
- Tell all healthcare providers that you have MRSA. This includes home health nurses and aides, therapists, and staff who work in doctors’ offices.
- Follow any other instructions your doctor gives you.

Questions for my doctor:

- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________

Hand washing with soap and water

1. Wet hands with warm, running water.
2. Apply liquid soap or use a clean bar of soap. Lather well.
3. Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 15 to 20 seconds. Be sure to scrub all surfaces of your hands and fingers.
4. Rinse well. Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
5. Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

Hand washing with a hand sanitizer

1. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Apply it to the palm of your hand. Read the label to see how much to apply.
2. Be sure to cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers. Rub your hands together until they are dry.

People can become infected if they touch surfaces that are contaminated with germs. Healthcare providers can spread the germs if they don’t wash their hands often enough. If you don’t see your healthcare providers clean their hands, please ask them to do so.

The information in this fact sheet is cosponsored by: Society of Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), American Hospital Association (AHA), Association for Practitioners in Infection Control (APIC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Joint Commission.