

**Frequent hand hygiene
(hand washing) is the
single most effective
way of preventing
the transmission of
infections.**



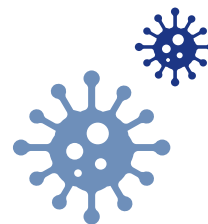
Calvary John James Hospital
acknowledges the Infection Control &
Staff Health Department of Calvary Public
Hospital Bruce, who assisted with the
development of this brochure.



Public Hospital Bruce



Consumer Endorsed
Patient Information Publication



Enquiries

Should you have any further questions
please ask your hospital doctor or GP, or
contact our Infection Control Coordinator
on **(02) 6229 8983**.

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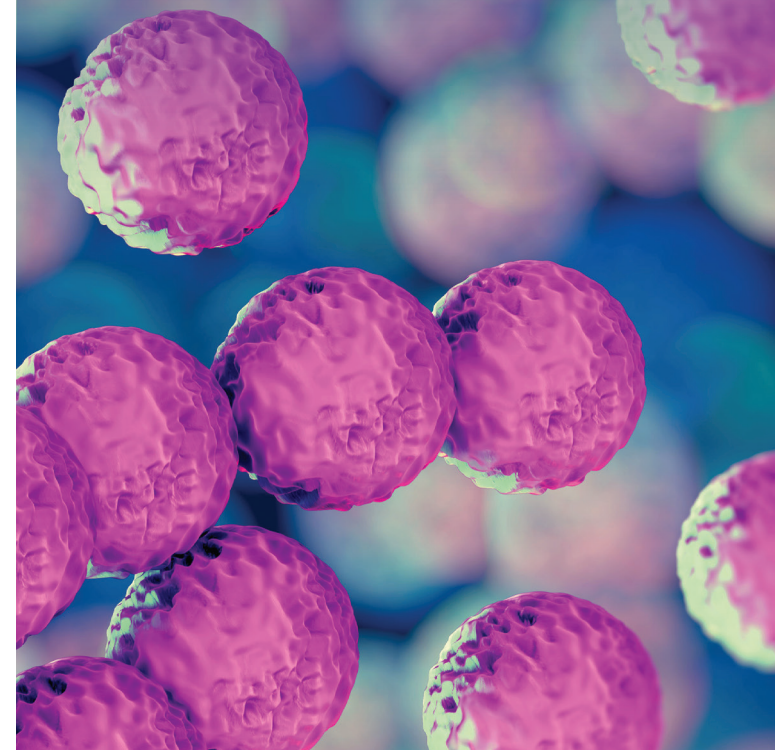
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Methicillin-resistant
Staphylococcus aureus
(MRSA)

Patient information



Calvary

John James Hospital

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary

What is methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria that can live on the skin. Over time some of these bacteria have become resistant to antibiotics. This means the bacteria are no longer killed by regular antibiotics. These resistant bacteria are called MRSA. MRSA is often incorrectly referred to as 'Golden Staph', this term covers all types of staphylococcus aureus. There are a number of different types of MRSA. Some are acquired from the community and others are healthcare related.

How is MRSA diagnosed?

A swab from a wound, the nose and groin, or a blood culture, urine or sputum sample is collected and sent to the laboratory for testing. The laboratory will check if the bacteria are resistant to certain antibiotics.

Is MRSA harmful?

MRSA is not usually an issue for healthy people and can live on a person's body without causing any harm. This is called being 'colonised' with MRSA. However MRSA can cause infection if it gets into the body. MRSA can cause skin infections, infect wounds, urine and sputum; this can cause problems for patients in hospital.

How did you get MRSA?

You may have had MRSA before you came into hospital or you may have picked it up in hospital.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA can be spread from person to person or from contact with contaminated surfaces and equipment. MRSA can be spread by health care workers who have not performed hand hygiene effectively following contact with MRSA bacteria. It is important that all staff and visitors perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after contact with a patient. MRSA spread can also occur from touching an infected wound, or sharing equipment or personal items with a MRSA patient.

How can the spread of MRSA be prevented?

Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser:

- before and after touching an infected area
- after blowing your nose
- after using the toilet
- before handling food and eating
- whenever your hands are visibly soiled

Ask staff and visitors to perform hand hygiene before and after contact with you. Avoid touching that part of your body that has MRSA. Keep wounds covered. Do not share clothes, towels, bed linen, nail scissors, tweezers, razors or toothbrushes.

What will happen while you are admitted to hospital?

You will be in a single room or in a shared room with another MRSA patient. Staff will be required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves when caring for you to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to other patients on the ward.

If you have an MRSA infection, your doctor may treat you with antibiotics.

It is important that you remain in your room to reduce the risk of spreading the MRSA bacteria. If you do need to leave your room, you will need to perform hand hygiene and ensure any wounds are covered. You must not visit other patients in your ward or around the hospital.

If you need to be transferred within the hospital, the nursing staff will inform the other departments to ensure appropriate care is taken to reduce the risk of the spread of MRSA. Upon transfer if staff caring for you are not wearing gowns and gloves, please advise them that you have MRSA. hygiene prior to leaving. You must not visit other patients in your ward or around the hospital.

What happens when I go for surgery?

If you have tested positive for MRSA during pre-admission screening, you may be given an antiseptic body lotion and/or antibiotic cream to assist with ridding MRSA from your body.

Please use both preoperatively as directed.

If safe to do so, you will be placed last on the operating list to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to other patients.

What happens when I go home?

You do not need to do anything extra at home. Good levels of general personal and household hygiene, including hand hygiene, are important to reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to others. Eating utensils and dishes may be washed as normal.

Wounds should be covered –

- overnight if you share a bed with your partner
- upon your return to work
- if you are playing a contact sport

You can return to work when your doctor is happy for you to do so. If you are a health care worker, please supply a medical certificate signed by your doctor upon your return, clearing you to resume your normal duties.

If you have to visit your hospital doctor, GP or another health care facility, please advise them that you have MRSA.

Will the MRSA go away?

Some people do eradicate their MRSA. To achieve this, follow up swabs/specimens need to be collected once you are no longer taking antibiotics or have any tubes left in your body. The swabs/specimens will need to be collected twice, one month apart; both results will have to be negative before you can be considered to be MRSA-negative. These swabs cannot be collected within three months of a positive result.