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# FAQs about MRSA

## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus



## What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to some of the antibiotics that are often used to treat staph infections.

About 1 out of every 3 people have staph on their skin or in their nose. This germ does not cause any problems for most people, but it can sometimes cause serious infections such as skin or wound infections, pneumonia or blood infections.

### How do I get an MRSA infection?

People who have MRSA may be able to spread the germ to other people. MRSA can be passed through bed linens, bed rails, bathroom fixtures and medical equipment. It can spread to other people on contaminated equipment and on the hands of doctors, nurses, other healthcare providers and visitors. People who are healthy and who have not been in the hospital or a nursing home can also get MRSA infections.

### Can MRSA infections be treated?

Yes, there are antibiotics that can kill MRSA germs. Some patients with MRSA abscesses may need surgery to drain the infection. Your healthcare provider will determine which treatments are best for you.

### How do hospitals prevent MRSA infections?

To prevent MRSA infections, doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers:

- Clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after caring for every patient. If you do not see your providers clean their hands, please ask them to do so.

- Carefully clean hospital rooms and medical equipment.
- Use “contact precautions” when caring for patients with MRSA. Contact precautions mean:
  - Whenever possible, patients with MRSA will have a single room or will share a room only with someone else who also has MRSA.
  - Healthcare providers will put on gloves and wear a gown over their clothing while caring for patients with MRSA.
  - Visitors may also be asked to wear a gown and gloves.
  - When leaving the room, hospital providers and visitors remove their gown and gloves and clean their hands.
  - Patients on contact precautions are asked to stay in their hospital rooms as much as possible. They should not go to common areas, such as the gift shop or cafeteria.



### **What do I need to do when I go home from the hospital?**

To prevent another MRSA infection and to prevent spreading MRSA to others:

- Keep taking antibiotics prescribed by your doctor. Don't take half-doses or stop before you complete your prescribed course.
- Clean your hands often, especially before and after changing your wound dressing or bandage.
- People who live with you should clean their hands often as well.
- Keep any wounds clean and change bandages as instructed until healed.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
- Wash and dry your clothes and bed linens in the warmest temperatures recommended on the labels.
- Tell your healthcare providers that you have MRSA. This includes home health nurses and aides, therapists and staff in doctors' offices.

**If you have questions, please ask your doctor or nurse or visit [www.cdc.gov/mrsa](http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa).**

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