



# FAST FACTS: MRSA

Nursing Home Quality Initiative

## METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<p>Staphylococcus Aureus (S. Aureus), a bacteria that is commonly found on the skin, is usually harmless. However, when it invades the human body, it can be dangerous. One S. Aureus strain has been more difficult to treat, causing worse disease, because the antibiotics methicillin and other penicillins no longer kill it. This strain is called Methicillin Resistant S. Aureus (MRSA).</p>
<b>STATISTICS</b>	<p>According to Kuehnert MJ, et al., about 126,000 people are hospitalized with a diagnosis of MRSA annually. Very serious infections occur in about 94,000 people (86% healthcare-associated; 14% community-associated) and are associated with about 19,000 deaths yearly (Klevens, et al. 2007).</p>
<b>HOW IS MRSA TRANSMITTED?</b>	<p>MRSA is spread mostly by direct physical contact. MRSA prefers to live in the nose, armpits, groin, blood and/or urine, and other moist areas, but can also live on objects within the environment. The bacteria can live for days on clothing, towels, healthcare equipment and personal items.</p>
<b>WHO CAN GET MRSA?</b>	<p>Anyone can get MRSA. Those who get dangerous MRSA infections usually are elderly, practice poor hygiene, have compromised immune systems, or have open wounds, chest tubes, catheters, etc.</p>
<b>HOW IS MRSA TREATED?</b>	<p>As strange as it sounds, MRSA is treated with antibiotics taken by mouth, topically or intravenously. The antibiotics used to treat MRSA are very powerful. All prescribed doses of these antibiotics should be taken, even if the person being treated begins to feel better.</p>
<b>WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF MRSA?</b>	<p>One of the best things you can do help prevent the spread of MRSA is to <b>wash your hands!</b> Hands can be washed with simple soap and water or an alcohol-based hand-sanitizer*.</p> <p>Other things you can do to avoid getting MRSA or giving it to others include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not share personal items (towels, razors, etc.)</li> <li>• Keep cuts/lesions clean and covered with bandages</li> <li>• Do not touch other people's cuts/lesions</li> <li>• Take antibiotics only when necessary</li> </ul> <p>*Healthcare workers should wash hands before and after patient care and follow internal policies for prevention/spread of MRSA (e.g. infection, housekeeping).</p>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html">http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html</a> - Healthcare-associated MRSA  <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html">http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html</a> - Community-associated MRSA            Kuehnert MJ et al. <i>Emerging Infectious Diseases</i>. 2005; 11:868-72            Klevens et al. <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i>. 2007; 298(15): 1763-1771</p>

This material is distributed by the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care, Inc. (KFMC), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Kansas, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and was prepared by Quality Partners of Rhode Island. Publication #8SOW-KS-NHQI-07-79.

