

It is the mission of Compassionate Care Home Health Services, Inc. to promote recovery and independence to those in need by providing the highest quality of compassionate care for our clients in the comfort of their own home. We understand the importance of following healthy infection control measures at all times.

MRSA, Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, is a staph infection that is resistant to some of the antibiotics that have traditionally been used to treat staph infections. MRSA is most often carried by humans, almost never by animals. Some people carry this bacteria on their skin or in their nose without knowing it and without experiencing any symptoms of disease. These bacteria are spread person-to-person by direct contact. If a person has MRSA on their skin and touches another individual, they may spread MRSA. The bacteria can survive on clothes, but it is more often spread by the hands.

Healthy people are not usually at risk for developing MRSA disease. Those with an increased chance of getting a MRSA infection include:

- Anyone over the age of 65
- Those living in crowded settings
- Anyone with prolonged hospitalization
- Anyone with an open wound
- Anyone with another severe illness

It usually takes 4-10 days to develop a MRSA infection after being exposed to the bacteria. MRSA infections are most commonly manifested as skin infections, such as cellulitis, boils, or wound infections. MRSA can also cause pneumonia, an infection in the blood stream, an infection in the heart, or the "stomach flu." MRSA can usually be treated effectively with strong antibiotics.

Because skin infections are the most common form of MRSA, it is important to watch for any suspicious skin problems. If a cut or scrape becomes red, swollen, painful, warm to the touch, or starts draining pus you should call your doctor right away.

The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of MRSA is to wash your hands. Hands must be washed with friction and with soap for at least 15 seconds under running water:

- Before preparing food or eating
- Before and after touching wounds/bandages
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- After using the bathroom
- Whenever you think it might be a good idea

An alcohol based hand sanitizer can be substituted when soap and running water are not readily available. Additional steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of MRSA include:

- Keep wounds clean, dry, and covered with a fresh band aid/bandage
- Avoid touching soiled bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items, even with family members (towel, washcloth, razor, ointments)
- Wash clothes, towels, sheets regularly in the hottest water suitable for the fabric. Bleach may be added if desired, but check the label on the clothing first.
- Dry clothing in a clothes dryer – avoid "line drying".
- Clean and disinfect household surfaces that are touched often (door knobs, phones, etc.) following the manufacturer's cleaning instructions.

Additional information may be obtained from the Michigan Department of Community Health.



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