

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of staphylococcus bacterium (a germ) that is resistant to many common antibiotics. It is not resistant to all antibiotics, however. Staphylococcus bacteria (or 'staph') often live on the skin or in the nose, without causing any health problems (this is called colonization). Most people who carry MRSA on their skin or in their nose do not get an infection, or get sick from it.

However, 'staph' bacteria (including MRSA) sometimes do cause infections, most often in skin, wounds, or in the lungs. Skin infections can cause redness, swelling, and pus to form. Lung infections can cause fever, cough and shortness of breath. Infections may need to be treated with antibiotics.

How is MRSA spread?

MRSA is usually spread from person to person through touch. Someone with MRSA on his hands can pass it to others by touching them.

How can we prevent MRSA from spreading?

Cleaning your hands is the best way to prevent MRSA from spreading to others. Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

Keep open wounds, cuts or scrapes clean, and covered with a dry bandage.

Don't share personal items that touch the skin, like towels, clothing, or razors.

Keep hands clean!

The best way to prevent MRSA (and other infections) from spreading to others is by cleaning your hands.

Clean hands often:

- If they are dirty
- Before preparing or eating food
- After blowing your nose
- After using the bathroom
- After contact with body fluids
- After changing a bandage

Remember!

- Use soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer
- If you can see dirt on your hands alcohol based hand sanitizers won't work. You must wash with soap and water.

Want more info?

Check out IPAC Canada (Infection Prevention and Control Canada)

<https://ipac-canada.org/antibiotic-resistant-organism-resources>

Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/fact-sheet-community-acquired-methicillin-resistant-staphylococcus-aureus-mrsa.html>