



## **METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)**

### *Information Sheet for Patients and Visitors*

#### **What is MRSA?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacteria that lives on the skin and mucous membranes of healthy people. When *Staphylococcus aureus* develops resistance to certain antibiotics, it is called Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA. Infections caused by MRSA can be more difficult to treat.

#### **How is MRSA spread?**

MRSA is spread from one person to another by contact usually by unwashed hands. It can also spread from contact with soiled equipment and surfaces. MRSA can live on hands and objects in the environment.

#### **What special precautions are required for MRSA?**

- You may be isolated in a room by yourself or with someone who also has MRSA
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves will be worn by everyone who provides care as well as visitors that enter the room.
- A Contact Precautions sign will be placed on your door. If the MRSA is in your sputum, those providing care will need to wear a mask and eye protection if you are coughing. You will be asked to wear a mask if you are leaving the room for a test (which should only be for very short periods of time and for certain reasons like therapy)The room and equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room using soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub. It is important that you clean your hands well after blowing your nose, sneezing, touching open wounds and especially after using the toilet.
- Open wounds must be completely covered and if you have difficulty controlling your bladder or bowels incontinence products should be used to prevent leaks.

#### **What will happen at home?**

Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you. You should wash your hands before you make any food, before you eat and after using the toilet.

Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others and helps your doctor choose the right antibiotics if necessary.