

[www.HAIwatch.com](http://www.HAIwatch.com)

## What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, a member of the extremely common *Staphylococcus* (Staph) family of bacteria. Infections caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* have been treated successfully with antibiotics since the 1940's.

The growing concern in healthcare today is that MRSA and many other germs (collectively known as MDROs—Multiple Drug Resistant Organisms) have become increasingly resistant to the antibiotics used for treatment.

This information is provided by Kimberly-Clark Health Care, as part of our ongoing campaign to help reduce healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

### Sources used in the preparation of this brochure:

- 1 [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_MRSA\\_spotlight\\_2006.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_MRSA_spotlight_2006.html)
- 2 [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca\\_public.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html)
- 3 MRSA: Time for Action Study Guide, p.11. Kimberly-Clark Knowledge Network Video Education Program. 2007.



**Kimberly-Clark**

Trusted Clinical Solutions\*

\* Registered Trademark or Trademark of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc.  
©2008 KCWW. All rights reserved. H00736 H0808-08-01



# MRSA?

---

## NOT ON MY WATCH.\*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the proportion of antibiotic-resistant infections in healthcare settings is growing. In 1974, MRSA infections accounted for 2% of all staph infections; in 1995 it was 22%; in 2004 it was 63%.<sup>1</sup>

MRSA infections that are acquired by people who have been hospitalized or have had a medical procedure such as dialysis, surgery, or catheterization within the past year are known as healthcare-associated or HA-MRSA infections.

MRSA infections acquired by people with no documented healthcare contact in the past year are known as Community-Associated or CA-MRSA infections. MRSA infections in the community usually occur in otherwise healthy people and appear in the form of skin infections, like pimples and boils. However, in rare cases, CA-MRSA can cause life-threatening blood infections. Factors that have been associated with the spread of CA-MRSA include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, sharing of contaminated items such as towels and sports equipment, and poor hygiene.<sup>2</sup>

### What You Can Do to Avoid MRSA and Other MDROs

#### In Healthcare Facilities

MRSA can survive for weeks or months on almost any surface that comes in contact with patients or healthcare workers, including commonly used items such as stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, bed rails, bed tables, doorknobs, and computer keyboards.

Proper hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub gel plus the correct use of personal protective apparel, such as gowns, gloves, and masks (when necessary) are critical to protecting patients from contact transfer of germs and possible development of healthcare-associated infections.

- Make sure healthcare workers wash their hands or decontaminate them using an alcohol-based hand rub before touching you (or a friend or loved one, if you're acting as a patient advocate).
- Ask about the facility's policy regarding the use of personal protective equipment (gowns, gloves, masks), and request that healthcare workers change their personal protective equipment before caring for you (or a friend or loved one, if you're acting as a patient advocate).

#### In The Community

Be constantly aware of the possibility of picking up dangerous germs from your environment.

- Do not share sports equipment.
- Do not share towels or personal care items such as razors in school or club locker rooms.
- Do not walk barefoot in locker rooms.
- Keep any cuts or skin abrasions covered with a bandage until they are healed.
- Avoid physical contact with anyone who has exposed cuts or skin abrasions.

#### Additional Resources

For more information on ways to prevent HAIs, visit [www.HAIwatch.com](http://www.HAIwatch.com) and these websites:

[www.safecarecampaign.org](http://www.safecarecampaign.org)  
[www.ahrq.org/consumer/](http://www.ahrq.org/consumer/)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.who.int/patientsafety/en/](http://www.who.int/patientsafety/en/)  
[www.apic.org](http://www.apic.org)