What Does This Hospital Do to Prevent Infections?

Each kiosk at GHCH both East and West campus have masks available for visitors and patients. These are made available to protect others from transferring respiratory illnesses to each other in the waiting areas. Hand sanitizers are available also, so that you can cleanse your hands. The hand sanitizer will kill 99% of bacteria on your skin.

Vaccines are available to all employees:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A
- T-Dap (tetanus, diptheria and pertussis)

Seasonal flu vaccine is also available and is strongly recommended. The 2008-09 flu season, we have voluntarily vaccinated 82% of our HealthCare Workers (HCW's). The national average for healthcare workers being vaccinated is 47%. If, however a HCW doesn't want a flu vaccination, they will be required to wear a mask for the duration of the flu season if we have a large influx of patients coming in with influenza.

All employees are screened for TB prior to employment and annually thereafter.

Hospital cleanliness is most important to contain spread of MRSA as well as other multi-drug resistant organisms. We have a very strict regimen for cleaning rooms, hallways, bathrooms, units, common areas, etc. We use high level disinfectants to cleanse these areas and reduce bio load as much as possible. ***As a result, MRSA infections from visiting GHCH are very rare and GHCH is well below the national average for HA-MRSA.***

How Does GHCH Rate in Regards to Hospital Acquired MRSA Infection?

GHCH has a very low incidence of Hospital Acquired MRSA (HA-MRSA).

This form of MRSA infection occurs when a patient comes to a hospital for treatment, and is exposed to MRSA while in the hospital. In 2008, there were been 5 persons who have contracted MRSA while at GHCH, which is a very low number, given the almost 6000 patients GHCH served during that time frame. The incidence of infection at other hospitals in Washington State is much higher.

Year	Total Admissions:	Number of HA-MRSA infections	Percentage of HA-MRSA infections
2006	5,217	4	0.07%
2007	5,613	6	0.10%
2008	5,810	5	0.08%

However, MRSA infections in the Grays Harbor community are above the National Average. This is why early detection by a physician and good hygiene are so very important.

Hand washing should be done often as a first line of defense against acquiring MRSA.

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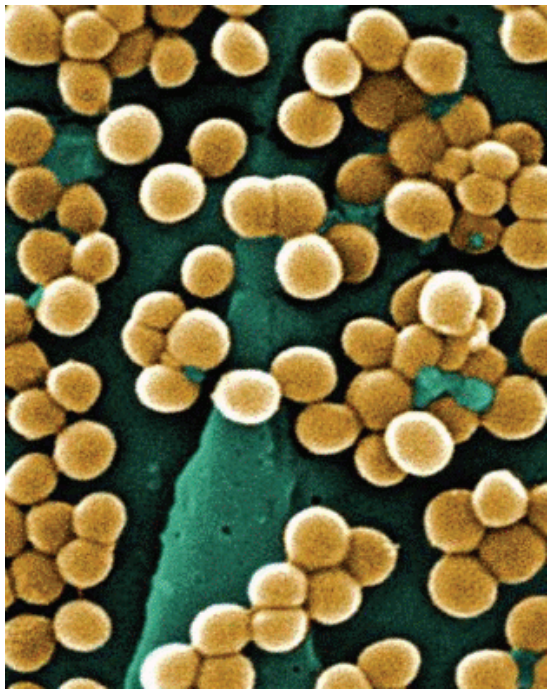
What is MRSA?

(Methicilin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)



Helpful Information For You and Your Family

A public service of:

Grays Harbor COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
Caring for the Harbor

About MRSA

What is *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph)?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria. Sometimes, staph can cause an infection. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics (also known as antimicrobials or antibacterials). However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia).

What is MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)?

Some staph bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics called beta-lactams. Beta-lactam antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized with staph.

What is community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)?

MRSA infections that are acquired by persons who **have not** been recently (within the past year) hospitalized or had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheters) are know as CA-MRSA infections. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people.

How common are staph and MRSA infections?

Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States and are a common cause of pneumonia, surgical wound infections, and bloodstream infections. The majority of MRSA infections occur among patients in hospitals or other healthcare settings; however, it is becoming more common in the community setting. Approximately 2/3 of the Staphyloccocus aureus infections in our community are MRSA, but this varies by geographic region and population.

What does a staph or MRSA infection look like?

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage**.** More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

Photograph of MRSA infection on the forehead of a 60-year-old man.

How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?

Practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

What should I do if I think I have a staph or MRSA infection?

See your healthcare provider.

Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?

Yes. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If you are given an antibiotic, take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save unfinished antibiotics to use at another time.

However, many staph skin infections may be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

If after visiting your healthcare provider the infection is not getting better after a few days, contact them again. If other people you know or live with get the same infection tell them to go to their healthcare provider.