



## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Fact Sheet

### What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus. It is a type of S. aureus different from most other bacteria because it cannot be treated by using common antibiotics.

### How does MRSA affect people?

MRSA affects people in many different ways. People can carry it in the nose or on the skin without showing any illness. This is called colonization and these individuals are carriers of MRSA. MRSA can also infect tissues and cause symptoms, ranging from skin sores to deeper infections such as pneumonia; this is called infection.

### Who is at risk for MRSA infections?

Normal healthy people are not usually at risk for MRSA disease. People having an increased chance of getting MRSA include the elderly (over 65 years of age), people with an open wound or people with severe medical problems.

### How is the MRSA spread?

The bacteria is spread from person to person by direct contact. This means if a person has MRSA on his skin (especially on the hands) and touches another individual, he may spread MRSA. A person may have MRSA on his hands as a result of being a carrier or from

[OCCHD.ORG](http://OCCHD.ORG) |  [Facebook](#) - Search OKC-County Health or @OCCHD

[OCCHD App](#) - Search OCCHD on the  [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) 



## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Fact Sheet

touching another person who is a carrier or infected with MRSA.

### **What is the most important measure to prevent the spread of MRSA?**

Hand washing is the single most important measure to prevent the spread of MRSA. Soap and warm running water for 20 seconds should be used. Proper hand washing should be used after caring for sick people, after handling soiled bandages and clothing, and after wearing protective gloves.

### **Can a person with MRSA be denied admission to a nursing home?**

There are no reasons to deny nursing home admission for a person colonized with MRSA. MRSA, along with other bacteria, may be present in any patient. A person with a MRSA infection can be placed in a nursing home provided the patient's physician, family and the nursing home agree. If the colonized or infected person is transferred to another facility, the receiving facility should be told in advance.

### **Does a person with MRSA have to be separated from healthy individuals?**

Living with a colonized patient presents little or no risk for members of the household who are not at high risk

[OCCHD.ORG](http://OCCHD.ORG) |  [Facebook](#) - Search OKC-County Health or @OCCHD

[OCCHD App](#) - Search OCCHD on the [Apple Store](#)  or [Google Play](#) 



## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Fact Sheet

for MRSA infection. In a nursing home, a colonized patient can be placed with another colonized patient (if one has been identified) or with a patient who is not at high risk for MRSA infection. A person with MRSA infection, however, should be seen by a physician before being placed with other people in a household or nursing home setting.

### **How is MRSA treated?**

Persons who are carrying MRSA but are not showing symptoms usually do not need to be treated. The antibiotic to treat persons with MRSA infections is vancomycin. The decision of whether to treat or not should be made by the patient's physician.

### **Are there MRSA guidelines available in Oklahoma?**

In 1990, the Oklahoma State MRSA Working Group (consisting of physicians and nurses) and the Oklahoma State Department of Health wrote guidelines for the control of MRSA in Oklahoma. These guidelines can be obtained by calling the OSDH.

*For further information, contact the  
Oklahoma City-County Health  
Department (405) 425-4437*

revised 04/2013

[OCCHD.ORG](http://OCCHD.ORG) |  **Facebook** - Search OKC-County Health or @OCCHD

**OCCHD App** - Search OCCHD on the  **App Store** or  **Google Play**