

## ***Patient/Family Education about...***

### **Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)**

#### **What is Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*?**

- Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria commonly found on the skin of healthy people. Occasionally, “Staph.” can get into the body and cause an infection.
- Most of these skin infections are minor (pimples and boils). Staph. also cause more serious infections (such as surgical site infections, bloodstream infection, and pneumonia).
- Staph is sometimes resistant to commonly used antibiotics and they are referred to as Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA.

#### **What is colonization?**

- Persons who carry bacteria (including MRSA) on their skin or elsewhere without disease or inflammation are considered colonized.
- Colonized persons can sometimes spread bacteria to others in close physical contact even without having any physical symptoms themselves.

#### **Who gets MRSA Infections?**

- Occurs among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities especially those who have weakened immune systems
- Many strains are now acquired in the community by healthy people from contact with others who carry the bacteria or surfaces that harbor the bacteria

#### **Are MRSA infections treatable?**

- Treatment may include taking an antibiotic and/or having a doctor drain the infection.
- Several antibiotics remain available that can cure MRSA infections in most circumstances.
- Some persons, particularly with strains acquired in the community, can experience future infections due to it’s persistence on the skin. Early physician consultation is recommended for future outbreaks.
- Colonization in the nose usually does not require treatment at all.

#### **What can I do to prevent others from getting infected?**

- Isolation precautions are used in the hospital to prevent transmission to others who are vulnerable due to illness or surgery. See separate sheet.
- Isolation precautions are not normally needed at home. Casual contact with adults and children such as kissing, hugging, and touching are acceptable. It is important to wash hands after contact with someone who has MRSA.
- Keep wounds clean and covered with a proper dressing or bandage until they are healed.
- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Disposable gloves should be worn if contact with body fluids such as a wound, urine, or ostomy bag.
- Your environment should be routinely cleaned with common household detergents. Consider use of disinfectants (such as bleach) when the environment is soiled with body fluids.

Notify physicians and healthcare providers who provide care for you that you have a history of MRSA.