colonization. A simple and painless test (called a culture) can be done to find out if you are colonized with MRSA in your nose and/or the skin of the groin area.

Sometimes CA-MRSA infections are a one-time event. For others, new skin infections may happen from time to time and should be managed as they happen.

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References
Community Associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)

What is MRSA?

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacterium (germ) that commonly lives on the skin, or in the noses of healthy people. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is the term for *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria that have become resistant to the usual antibiotics used to treat infections caused by these bacteria.

MRSA is often found in health care settings.

What is CA-MRSA?

CA-MRSA is a type of MRSA that is being seen in people who are otherwise healthy and have had no contact with health care.

In the community, most CA-MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as boils, which often are red, swollen, painful, and have pus or other drainage.

These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and in areas of the body covered by hair (e.g., back of neck, groin, buttock, armpit, and beard area of men).

These infections can be treated. Sometimes drainage (cutting the area open) and/or antibiotics are needed.

Rarely, MRSA can cause serious infections such as pneumonia and bloodstream infections. These severe infections need urgent medical treatment.

Who is at risk for CA-MRSA?

Anyone can get CA-MRSA because it moves through our communities. It is spread by contact (touching) such as

Keep a Clean Environment

Clean shared items (e.g. sports equipment or environmental surfaces) with over the counter detergent/disinfectant that is right for the type of surface being cleaned. Gym equipment should be cleaned before and after each use.

Contact Precautions

While you are a patient in a Capital Health facility (hospital, health centre, emergency room etc…) Contact Precautions will be used during your stay.

CA-MRSA germs can be spread on the hands and clothing of health care providers and on pieces of medical equipment or furniture. Contact Precautions are used to help stop this spread.

You may be placed in a private room/area.

Health care workers may wear gowns, gloves and masks.

Health care workers will also:

- Clean their hands often
- Provide equipment for your use only
- Place a Contact Precautions sign above the head of your bed or on your door/curtain area. The signs remind all hospital staff and visitors of the Contact Precautions needed. To protect your privacy, only certain hospital staff will know why Contact Precautions are in place.

After treatment, your CA-MRSA may go away, or you may carry the bacteria for months or even years. This is called

soap, razors and athletic items that touch the skin.

- Wash clothing using regular laundry soap in the usual wash cycle of a household washing machine.

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touching people who have a CA-MRSA infection or things in the environment that are soiled with CA-MRSA bacteria.

There are five common “Cs” that describe risk factors for CA-MRSA infections:
- crowded conditions
- close contact
- lack of cleanliness
- sharing common personal items (towels and sports equipment)
- having compromised or broken skin, such as cuts.

High risk groups/settings for CA-MRSA include:
- Athletes, sports teams
- Daycares
- Military personnel
- Homeless shelters
- Intravenous drug users
- MSM (men who have sex with men)
- Inmates of correctional facilities
- People who live in dormitories

How can you prevent the spread of CA-MRSA if you have it?
- If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to follow the instructions given by your health care providers.
- Do not share antibiotics with other people or save unfinished antibiotics to use at another time.
- Come back for follow-up medicine and appointments as instructed.
- If within a few days of visiting your health care provider the infection is not getting better, call him or her again.

If other people you know or live with get the same infection tell them to go to their health care provider.

Wounds
- Follow your health care provider’s instructions on proper care of the wound.
- Keep wounds that are draining covered with clean, dry bandages.
- Used bandages can be thrown out in the regular trash.
- If unable to keep a wound covered with a clean, dry bandage at all times, you should not take part in activities where there is skin-to-skin contact with other persons (such as athletic activities) until the wound is healed.

Clean Your Hands
- Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub (minimum 62%-70% alcohol).
- If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water works best.
- Antibacterial soaps are NOT recommended for most situations.
- Always clean hands right away after touching skin lesions or any item that has come in direct contact with a draining wound.

Good Hygiene
- Use good general hygiene with regular showering or bathing.
- Do not share personal items that may become dirty with wound drainage, such as towels, clothing, bedding, bar
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