



## Community-Associated MRSA

CA-MRSA stands for **Community-Associated Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus***. It is a type of bacteria that has been found in people who have not had exposure to hospitals or healthcare. MRSA is not a new infection. MRSA has been known to cause infections in hospitals and healthcare settings for decades. MRSA in community settings (CA-MRSA) has only recently been identified.

### What are the Symptoms of CA-MRSA?

The symptoms of a CA-MRSA infection depend on where the infection occurs. CA-MRSA can cause infections such as boils, rashes or open wounds. Sometimes the boil, rash or wound may get worse and become a more serious soft tissue infection. CA-MRSA can also cause infections of the lung, blood stream or joint(s) that can cause very serious illness.

CA-MRSA can also live on a person's skin, without causing an infection or any symptoms. This is often called the "carrier" state of CA-MRSA .

### How is CA-MRSA spread?

CA-MRSA can be spread by touching a person who has CA-MRSA or by handling things that they have used. Bar soap, blankets or razors are common objects that could spread CA-MRSA if shared.

### Who can get CA-MRSA?

Anyone can get it, but it is more likely to be found in

- Children
- Frequent antibiotic users
- People who play contact sports (football, wrestling)
- People in jail
- People who are homeless
- People who use IV drugs
- Men who have sex with men
- People who are in the military
- People who have a skin condition e.g. psoriasis, eczema.

### How can CA-MRSA be prevented?

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as toothbrushes, nail files, combs, brushes, towels, soap, razors, blankets with others.
- Cover cuts and scrapes with a bandage until healed.
- Do not touch other people's wounds or bandages.

- Clean and disinfect objects that you share with other people, such as gym equipment.
- Do not share lotions, soaps, cosmetics and other personal products that are in contact with the skin.
- Practice good personal hygiene i.e. showering after working out or playing contact sports.
- Wash hands after touching skin lesions or soiled dressings.

### **What should I do if I think I have a skin infection?**

Go to your doctor or to a clinic or hospital where medical assessment is available. Early medical attention can help to prevent an infection from getting worse. If you have an abscess, a health care provider may drain the pus.

### **What can I do to keep others from getting CA-MRSA if I have been told I have it?**

Keep the infected area covered with a clean bandage or as directed by your healthcare provider. Clean your hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol hand rub, especially after you change your bandages.

### **Are there special instructions for house cleaning?**

Regularly clean your bathroom, kitchen, and all other rooms with a standard household cleaner. Pay most attention to things that are frequently touched or shared.

### **Do clothes and dishes need to be washed separately?**

Clothes and linen can be washed in the regular household laundry. If your clothes are heavily soiled with body fluids such as pus, wash them separately. Dishes and cutlery can be washed by hand with soap and water or in a dishwasher.

### **Can pets get CA-MRSA?**

Yes, pets can get CA-MRSA too, so if you have pet in the home, make sure that you clean your hands before and after contact with them.

### **What else do I need to know if I have CA-MRSA?**

Always tell any healthcare providers who treat you that you have CA-MRSA.

This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject.

**If you have any further questions, contact your health care provider, or  
the South Eastern Ontario Infection Control Network  
at 613-546-3921 or 1-866-883-8428.**