

# Fact Sheet

## **MRSA – (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)**

### For Home Care Nurses and Workers

#### **Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)?**

Staphylococcus aureus (Staph) is a type of bacteria commonly found on everyone's skin. Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) means it cannot be killed with the antibiotic methicillin.

#### **What does MRSA look like?**

MRSA infections most often affect the skin and may appear as pimples or boils which are often red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. They can also affect the blood stream, the lungs, or large areas of skin. They are usually diagnosed with a laboratory test.

#### **What are the risks of MRSA?**

A simple infection can become very serious if it is caused by MRSA. These bacteria can infect healthy people who have never taken antibiotics. MRSA can't be killed by commonly used antibiotics. Sometimes no antibiotic will work.

#### **How is MRSA spread?**

MRSA is mainly found in health care settings; however it is not uncommon for MRSA to be found in public areas. An infected person can infect someone else by direct contact, such as kissing, sneezing, and close body contact. MRSA is also spread by indirect contact with items that have been touched by people with the bacteria, such as towels shared after bathing and drying off.

#### **Prevention of MRSA infections in home care:**

- Proper and timely hand washing with soap and warm water can help you avoid contracting and the spread of MRSA.
- Bring only the material you need to care for each client. This limits the number of items that may come in contact with MRSA.
- Schedule MRSA patients at the end of your day.
- Wash your hands after caring for a client with your own soap and towels; do not use soap or towels from the home.
- If water is not available, alcohol hand cleansers (e.g. Hand sanitizer) can be used.
- If clients have sores keep them covered with a dressing. Put used dressings in a plastic bag, tie the plastic bag and place in garbage. Wash hands after handling dressings.
- Wash any equipment used, including handles, with a proper disinfectant solution (see attached).  
Educate your clients to not share any personal items such as towels, razors, and toothbrushes.
- Wash any sheets, towels, and underclothing with hot water and detergent, and dry on the hottest setting.

**If you have any concerns or questions please contact your Community Health Centre or Public Health.**