

# FACT SHEET

## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)



### What is MRSA?

- MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to several antibiotics (including methicillin/oxacillin)
- People may be colonized (bacteria present without symptoms) or infected (bacteria present causing signs/symptoms)
- In LTC and retirement homes, MRSA most commonly causes skin and soft tissue infections (e.g., boils, abscesses, wound infections) but can also cause pneumonia or blood stream infections

### How is MRSA spread?

Contact transmission is the primary route:

- ① **Direct contact** (e.g., care activities involving the resident's skin/wounds/secretions)
- ② **Indirect contact** via contaminated hands, shared equipment or high touch surfaces

MRSA can persist on environmental surfaces and equipment; consistent cleaning/disinfection and hand hygiene are critical

### Common Signs & Symptoms

Depends on infection site:

- Skin/soft tissue: redness, warmth, swelling, tenderness, purulent drainage
- Lungs: cough, fever, shortness of breath
- Bloodstream: fever/chills, low blood pressure, systemic illness

Colonization has no symptoms. Colonized residents do **NOT** require treatment unless clinically indicated

### Risk Factors



- Recent or recurrent antibiotic exposure
- Breaks in skin integrity (wounds/ulcers, invasive devices)
- Rooming in shared spaces; high care needs
- Recent hospitalization or transfer from another facility

### How to Prevent Transmission



#### Hand Hygiene

- Promote hand washing for staff, residents & visitors



#### Environmental Cleaning

- Daily and at discharge/transfer; ensure product has a MRSA claim and required contact time is met
- Focus on high touch surfaces and the resident care environment



#### Education and Awareness

- Educate staff, residents and visitors about importance of adherence to IPAC practices



#### Additional Precautions

- Contact Precautions for residents with MRSA infection or draining wounds that cannot be contained
- Private room preferred; otherwise, cohort with residents with the same organism/risk profile when feasible
- Dedicated or disinfect between uses for non-critical equipment

### Preparedness & Management

- Early recognition of transmission (e.g., clustering of MRSA infections/colonizations)
- Antimicrobial Stewardship: use antibiotics only when clinically indicated; select narrow spectrum and shortest effective duration as per prescriber guidance
- Consider cohorting staff and residents if transmission occurs
- Review cleaning/disinfection program, PPE supplies, and specimen collection process

