MRSA, Clostridium difficile and Other Drug Resistant Bacteria Information for Patients and Families

What is Drug Resistant Bacteria?

Drug Resistant Bacteria also referred to as Multi Drug Resistant Organisms or MDRO's are germs that can be found on the skin of healthy people and sometimes in the environment.

Sometimes, these germs can get into the body and cause an infection.

This infection can be minor (such as pimples or boils) or serious (such as blood infection or pneumonia).

What is Drug Resistant Bacteria?

Drug Resistant Bacteria are germs that can not be treated by some antibiotics often used to treat infections.

What is the difference between Drug Resistant Bacteria colonization and infection?

Colonization means that these germs are living on or in the body without causing illness.

Infection means that these germs are making the person sick.

Who gets Drug Resistant Bacteria?

Anyone can get Drug Resistant Bacteria but especially people who have been in the hospital or a nursing home for a long time, have an open wound, have a tube (such as a urine drainage tube, or feeding tube) going into the body, are sick with a long term illness, or have taken many antibiotics are more likely to get acquire these germs. Also, people in the community can get Drug Resistant Bacteria usually those with close contact to people with the germ.

Healthy people rarely get these infections (but they may).

How does the doctor know that someone has Drug Resistant Bacteria?

A doctor or nurse may take a culture to see if Drug Resistant Bacteria is present.

The culture is taken by rubbing a cotton swab or sending a sample of urine, sputum, wound drainage, or blood.

The test results are ready in two or three days.

Can Drug Resistant Bacteria be treated?

Yes.

Different antibiotics can still cure Drug Resistant Bacteria infections.

Patients who are only colonized with Drug Resistant Bacteria often do not need treatment.

Can Drug Resistant Bacteria spread?

Yes, Drug Resistant Bacteria is almost always **spread by touching**, often by hands contaminated with these germs, and NOT through the air.

Can Drug Resistant Bacteria spread? Continued:

John Dempsey Hospital takes special steps to prevent the spread of these germs from patient to patient by practicing frequent hand washing and to separate, or isolate, patients with these infections from other patients when appropriate.

What happens for all patients in John Dempsey Hospital?

- Health care workers will put on gloves and a gown (and sometimes a mask) before going into the patient's room.
- Health care workers must remove the gloves before leaving the room
- Health care workers must wash their hands with soap and water or waterless hand cleaner, before leaving the room. A squirt is all you need to cleanse your hands.

What happens when a patient with these germs is isolated? In addition to above precautions…..

- The patient is placed in a room with a patient with a similar diagnosis and treated with strict contact precautions.
- Health care workers will put on gloves and sometimes a gown and mask before providing direct patient contact.
- Health care workers must remove the gloves, and gowns (and masks) before leaving the room
- Health care workers must wash their hands with soap and water or waterless hand cleaner before leaving the room. A squirt is all you need to cleanse your hands.

What about visitors?

- Visitors should wash hands frequently with soap and water or waterless hand cleaner (as long as hands are not visibly soiled).
- If Families or Visitors are involved in direct patient care they should wear gloves and gowns and remove them before leaving the room. Remember to always wash your hands thoroughly after taking off gloves and gowns!!
- Most families should not bring children or infants into the room of an infectious patient, because it is hard for children to follow hospital isolation rules.

Should the person with Drug Resistant Bacteria be isolated at home?

If a person is colonized with these germs, isolation is rarely needed.

Most people can return to their daily routine. Good hand washing is most important.