



Florida Hospital's Quality Goals

1. Rank in the Top 10% of hospitals nationwide
2. Show ongoing cycles of improvement in all areas of patient care

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Classrooms and locker rooms across the country were closed in October for disinfection after a Brooklyn middle school student and a 17-year-old student from Virginia died from MRSA infections.

The precautionary measures were warranted. In October 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that nearly 19,000 people died in 2005 after being exposed to *methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA.

What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus, commonly referred to as “*staph*”, is a very common bacterium. The bacteria can be found in the nasal passage of 30% of the U.S. Population.¹ MRSA usually appears as a treatable skin infection that can look like pimples, boils or abrasions. It is most commonly spread through direct physical contact with an infected person or through contact with objects/surfaces that have been contaminated with MRSA.

Unfortunately, MRSA is one bacterium that does not respond to the antibiotics frequently used to treat other staph infections like methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin². Most MRSA infections can be treated merely by draining and bandaging wounds. Serious infections require a very powerful broad spectrum antibiotic. Due to the potency of the antibiotics being used, a hospital stay is often necessary. In rare cases, MRSA can cause death. Lethal cases occur when MRSA passes into the blood stream and organs, usually through open wounds or punctures.

Causes of antibiotic resistance:

- ✓ Overuse of antibiotics – people have used antibiotics unnecessarily for viral infections like colds and flu.
- ✓ Antibiotics are routinely used in food like cattle, pigs and chicken.
- ✓ Bacterial mutation – bacteria that survive treatment with one antibiotic may develop resistance to that drug or similar ones.

Hospital Acquired

People with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to MRSA infections. This means that MRSA related infections are more prevalent in people who are in a hospital or a long-term care facility. A 2007 study by the Journal of the American Medical Association said that 85% of MRSA infections occur in health care institutions.

¹ Floridahealthfinder.gov

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Most MRSA infections are preventable by increased attention to hospital and institutional hygiene.

“Proper hand washing is one of the simplest and easiest ways to prevent the spread of MRSA,” said David Moorhead, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Florida Hospital. “Florida Hospital has developed specific hand washing protocols and has launched a campaign to educate employees, patients and visitors.”

In addition to hand washing, Florida Hospital uses other precautions to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses. Infection control professionals actively track patterns and rates of infection in the hospital. They regularly educate hospital staff and promote evidence-based practices designed to prevent the spread of infection. Patients with known or suspected communicable infections stay in isolation rooms. Signs on the doors of isolation rooms notify staff and patients’ visitors of the recommended precautions for safely caring for or visiting the patient.

Community-Acquired

While MRSA has long been associated with health care facilities, MRSA infections are becoming more common in healthy individuals who have not been recently hospitalized. This type of MRSA infection is called community associated MRSA (CA-MRSA). These infections are more prevalent in communal situations such as the military, schools and prisons. It is also more common among young people who have cuts or wounds and who have close contact with one another, such as football players and wrestlers.

Preventing MRSA

Getting children and adults to pay attention to simple hygiene guidelines is an effective weapon against the MRSA bacteria. Following are some recommendations for preventing the occurrence and spread of MRSA.

In the hospital or nursing home

- ✓ Ask hospital staff if they have washed their hands.
- ✓ Follow hospital isolation procedures.
- ✓ Wash your own hands using the proper technique: soap and hot water for at least 15 seconds.

At home

- ✓ Shower daily with soap and hot water, especially after workouts and sport practices or competitions.
- ✓ Do not share personal items with others. Personal items may include but are not limited to clothes, towels and razors.
- ✓ Wash clothes and linens in hot water with detergent.
- ✓ Cover all wounds with a clean dry bandage.
- ✓ Use the antibiotics as prescribed by your physician.

For more information on MRSA, please visit www.cdc.gov