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# Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

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**I. The client/caregiver can define MSRA.**

- A. MRSA is an infection caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria or “staph.”
- B. It was one of the first infections to prove resistant to the broad-spectrum antibiotics.
- C. Staph infections are seen mostly in hospitals or health care facilities. They are hospital-acquired infections.
- D. The infection can also be acquired in a community setting.
- E. Staph can enter the body via a cut or wound. Unfortunately, the client with an impaired immune system or the older client can have a more serious infection.
- F. Vancomycin is currently effective against MRSA.

**II. The client/caregiver can list signs and symptoms of MRSA infection.**

- A. Staph infections usually start as red bumps that resemble pimples, boils, or spider bites.
- B. They can evolve into deep, painful abscesses that require surgical intervention.
- C. They can also cause infections in bones, joints, surgical wounds, bloodstream, heart valves, and lungs.

**III. The client/caregiver can list causes of MRSA infections.**

- A. Excessive and unnecessary use of antibiotics
- B. Antibiotic in food (beef, cattle, pigs, and chickens) and water supplies
- C. Bacteria (germs) that can quickly change and evolve to resist antibiotics

**IV. The client/caregiver can list risk factors for MRSA infections.**

- A. Risk factors for hospital-acquired infections
  - Recent or current stay in hospital
  - Living in a long-term care facility

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- Invasive procedures such as dialysis
  - Recent use of antibiotics
- B. Risks for community-acquired infections
    - Young age
    - Participating in contact sports
    - Sharing sports equipment or personal items such as towels or razors
    - Impaired immune system
    - Living in crowded or unsanitary conditions
    - Close contact with health care workers

**V. The client/caregiver can list measures to prevent or manage a hospital-acquired MRSA infection.**

- A. Wash your hands frequently.
- B. Ask health care workers to wash their hands before touching you.
- C. Ask to use disposable washcloths/ disinfectant rather than soap and water.
- D. Insist that sterile conditions are used when any procedure is performed.
- E. Insist that the health care workers and visitors follow any isolation precautions as set up by the hospital.

**VI. The client/caregiver can list measures to prevent or manage community-acquired MRSA infections.**

- A. Avoid sharing personal items such as
  - Towels and sheets
  - Razors and toothbrushes
  - Clothing and athletic equipment
- B. Keep all cuts or abrasions clean and covered.
- C. Avoid contact with others' wounds or items touching the wound such as towels or bandages.
- D. Sanitize linens. Wash gym and athletic clothes after each use.
- E. Wash your hands frequently. Carry hand sanitizer containing at least 62% alcohol for times when you cannot wash.

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F. Ask your physician whether you should be tested for MRSA if there is need to treat a skin infection.

**RESOURCES**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)

State or county health department

**REFERENCES**

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