Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)
Information Sheet for Patients & Visitors

MRSA Explained:
Staphylococcus aureus is bacteria that lives on the skin and mucous membranes of healthy people. Occasionally S. aureus can cause an infection. When S. aureus develops resistance to certain antibiotics, it is called methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA. MRSA may often be present without any signs or symptoms of an infection (colonized).

How MRSA Is Spread:
MRSA is spread from one person to another by contact, usually on the hands of caregivers. MRSA can be present on the caregiver's hands either from direct contact with a colonized person or from touching articles contaminated by a person with MRSA, such as towels, sheets and wound dressings. MRSA can live on hands and objects in the environment.

Special Precautions for MRSA:
Precautions are taken to stop MRSA from spreading to other patients in the hospital including:
- Special accommodations may be required for infection control purposes.
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves will be worn by everyone who cares for you.
- A sign may be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions.
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Everyone must clean their hands before entering and leaving the room.

Family & Visitors Protocols While at St. Mary’s:
Your family and visitors will be required to clean their hands with hand sanitizer and wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and/or the laundry hamper located in your room and clean their hand with hand sanitizer. These precautions will help prevent further transmission.

After You Leave St. Mary’s:
- Everyone who might help you with your personal care should practice good hand hygiene.
- Everyone should wash hands before making any food and before eating.
- Everyone should wash hands well after using the toilet.
- Clothing may be laundered in the usual manner along with the rest of the household laundry.
- No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g., dishes) in the home is required.
- If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a household cleanser.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses, or other care providers that you have MRSA. This helps prevent spread to others.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices:
- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose
- Before eating and drinking
- Before you leave your room
- Before and after you touch your dressing or wounds
- When your hands are visibly dirty

Reference:
Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, Annex A – Screening, testing and surveillance for antibiotic-resistant organisms (AROs). Annexed to: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; 2013