



MRSA Policy

Introduction

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacterium that can reside on the skin or can be found in the nose of about one third of healthy individuals. It is generally non-pathogenic except where it gains access to deep tissues such as broken skin, resulting in surgical site or wound infection, the bloodstream leading to bloodstream infection or bacteraemia, and to the lungs causing for example ventilator-associated pneumonia. Early penicillin antibiotics such as flucloxacillin were effective in the treatment of infections caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* but since the late 1960s many strains have become resistant, but as methicillin was amongst the first anti-staphylococcal agents used, these strains have subsequently been known as MRSA. The prevention and control of MRSA is a challenge in hospitals and in the community

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff of their responsibilities with regards to managing persons that are colonised or infected with MRSA, and those who are at high risk. The policy also aims to ensure that service users and their relatives or carers have confidence in the specific measures required to prevent and control MRSA and how these can and should be incorporated into quality measures to safeguard the quality of patient care

Scope of Policy

This policy is to be followed by all staff working for myhomecare.ie. These guidelines are relevant to and have been developed for all healthcare staff involved in the care of clients who may be at risk of or may have MRSA

MRSA In The Community

MRSA detected in the community may be classified according to the following categories:

- Patients discharged from hospital with MRSA
- Nursing home residents with MRSA
- MRSA transmitted to non-hospitalised patients or individuals from MRSA patients
- MRSA arising de novo in community

Individual Staff Members

- Be aware of and comply with myhomecare.ie policies procedures and guidance
- Promote confidentiality, sharing information with partners on a need to know basis
- Take part in training, including attending updates so that they maintain their skills and are familiar with procedures
- All practitioners registered and non-registered should access regular supervision and support in line with local procedures

- All staff should maintain accurate comprehensive and legible records, with records being stored securely in line with local guidance

Occupational Health/GP/Hospital

The role of the occupational health department and/or GP is to:

- Ensure any health screening has been undertaken to ensure the proposed employees do not pose an infection risk to clients or colleagues when commencing work with the company, e.g. MRSA, Tuberculosis Screening or Hepatitis vaccination
- Review the health of workers after illness to ensure readiness to return to work and suitability to return to previous work
- Monitor ongoing protection against certain infections such as MRSA
- Nursing staff should also inform, community/public health nurses, etc if a patient has MRSA on transfer or discharge. Advice on appropriate Infection Prevention & Control precautions plus MRSA information leaflets should be provided

Assessment of Risk

Assessment of risk and planning are integral to infection prevention and control and health staff will be expected to contribute to these processes

Standard precautions

Infection Control is based on the use of practices and procedures that prevent, or reduce, the risk of infection being transmitted from a source of infection (e.g. a person, contaminated body fluids, equipment, the environment etc.) to a susceptible individual.

In order to safeguard the health and safety of all service users and Myhomecare.ie workers, it is essential that good working practices are adapted at all times. This involves careful handling of all blood and body fluids from all service users, regardless of whether a risk of infection has been identified or not

Guidelines for the Management of MRSA within the Home

Hand Hygiene is the most important and effective method in preventing the spread of MRSA

All healthcare workers have a responsibility to minimise the occurrence and spread of infection.

- Apply good basic practices with regular hand hygiene being carried out before and after patient contact
- Hand hygiene should be practised between all physical interactions with service users
- Hands must be decontaminated with alcohol-based hand rub or washed with soap and water
- Cover existing wounds or skin lesions with waterproof dressings
- A disposable plastic apron and disposable non-sterile gloves must be worn when in direct contact with the person and his/her environment (e.g. ledges, bed linen, commodes, etc.).
- A risk assessment should be made regarding type of protective clothing used when caring for patients with MRSA.
- All staff must remove their protective clothing before leaving the room and dispose of safely
- Use of aseptic technique where required
- Safe handling and disposal of sharps and potentially infectious material
- Environmental controls including cleaning and spills management
- Keep cuts grazes sores and wounds covered with appropriate dressings at all times

Effective Hand Hygiene



You can use either liquid soap and water- Alcohol used under the following circumstances:

- Hands are visibly soiled
- The service user is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- There is direct hand contact with any body fluids
- There is known Norovirus, Clostridium difficile, MRSA or other diarrhoeal illnesses

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Wash hands prior to putting on PPE and after removal of PPE.
- Wear aprons during direct service user contact and use gloves and aprons if in contact with a person who is MRSA positive and when you are in contact with blood and body fluids.

Laundry and equipment Care

- The service user's family would be expected to manage the laundry needs for the service user however they may require guidance on laundering linen that has been soiled or is infected.
- Clothes and bedding should be machine-washed, preferably on a hot wash setting, or dry cleaned if unsuitable for machine washing
- Hazardous/infectious waste must be disposed of according to the waste management policy
- Change all bed linen, towels and patient clothing daily following patient cleansing.
- Equipment with which the MRSA colonised resident has been in contact, such as a

commode, should be cleaned with detergent and hot water. Chemical disinfection is not required.

- Cutlery, crockery, and healthcare-risk waste should be dealt with as per normal routine. No additional measures are required

Record Keeping

All records must be kept in accordance with national requirements such as the Data Protection Act and with myhomecare.ie information governance and record management policies.

Training

Myhomecare.ie will enable staff to participate in training in infection prevention and control and where appropriate this will be included in local induction programmes. The training will be proportionate and relevant to the roles and responsibilities of each staff member. Staff must attend training to ensure that they are competent and have reached an agreed standard of proficiency in the management of infection prevention and control. The delivery of training is the responsibility of the Operational teams.

It is the responsibility of the central training team to organise and publicise educational sessions and keep records of attendance.

Processes for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy include:

- Monitoring of needle stick injuries
- Monitoring of staff uptake of vaccinations and ongoing protection
- Monitoring of uptake of training
- Evidence of learning across the organisation
- Incident reporting procedure. Outbreaks of infectious diseases:

At times where there are outbreaks of infectious diseases, myhomecare.ie will implement its business continuity plan. All staff must reassess the care needs of their clients in order to prioritise caring for those most in need during a period where staffing levels are reduced.

Myhomecare.ie will offer its workers as much protection from the infectious disease as possible, however workers will need to understand that the protection provided can only be based on what protective measures are available during a time of shortage. Myhomecare.ie workers will continue to be required to use standard precautions at all times, though the use of personal protective equipment may need to be reduced if supplies for instance, aprons or gloves are in short supply.

Myhomecare.ie will work with local partners such as the Director of Public Health and national partners such as the Department of Health and the HSE in order to minimise the risks of transmission of infection as much as is practically possible

If staff become infected with the infectious disease, they would be expected to contact their line manager. They must not come in to work until they have been advised that they are able to.

Trusted Homecare delivered as part of the Servisource Group

Review 13-03-21

References:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/healthprotection>