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## Multi Drug Resistant Organisms (MDRO) patient information leaflet

### What are MDROs?

MDRO is short for multi drug resistant organism. MDRO bacteria (bugs) are resistant to many antibiotics. This means that they are harder to kill than most common bugs. Sometimes, antibiotic resistant bugs are called 'superbugs'. You might have heard of some of the more common superbugs like MRSA, CPE, ESBL and VRE. The bug you have is **not** one of those. Your doctor or nurse will have told you the name of the bug you have. You can ask them to write the name on the line below to help you remember it.

Name of bug: \_\_\_\_\_

For most people most of the time, MDROs live harmlessly on the skin or in the bowel. Sometimes they can get into the bladder, kidney, lung or blood and cause very serious infection. This usually happens in patients who are very vulnerable – for example, when they need intensive care or when they are having chemotherapy. If you get an MDRO infection, it can be treated with special antibiotics because the common antibiotics will not work. If you get a serious infection with an MDRO, doctors need to know as soon as possible so that you get the right antibiotics straight away.

### How did I get an MDRO?

Your medical team may be able to tell you more about where your MDRO came from depending on what the name of the bug is. You might have had the MDRO in your bowel for months or even years before you had a test that found it. It is often not easy to say where or when a person picked up an MDRO.

There are many different kinds of MDROs. Some of them are very common and are found naturally in the ground or in water. Mostly, we do not worry about them because they are harmless for healthy people. Some MDROs are rare except in patients who have to spend a lot of time in hospital.

### What are the symptoms of an MDRO bug?

As long as an MDRO stays on the skin or in the bowel, it usually does not cause an illness. However, if the MDRO gets into the bladder, wound, kidney or blood it can cause infection. When

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this happens, the infection feels the same as infection caused by another bug. The person often gets a temperature, feels pain and starts to shiver. The only difference is that, if you need treatment, you will have to have special antibiotics as ordinary antibiotics do not work.

### **How long will I have the MDRO?**

The MDRO can live in your bowel for months or even years. If you do not have to take antibiotics for a long time, you increase the chance of the MDRO fading away. If you need to take antibiotics often, it will take the MDRO longer to clear.

### **How can I reduce the spread of the MDRO?**

The best way to stop spread of all bugs and viruses is to keep the toilet rim, handle and seat clean and to clean your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet, before eating and after touching raw meat.

If you go to hospital, you will notice that the staff may be especially careful to clean their hands after they have been caring for you. Sometimes they will wear aprons and gloves. Sometimes you may be given a single room in hospital. These steps are taken to help reduce the spread of MDROs. If you know you are carrying a superbug, it is important to tell a member of staff when you come to hospital.

**The hospital will record that you have an MDRO on your patient chart. This will make sure that staff follow the correct hand hygiene procedures and give you the right treatment if you come back into hospital.**

### **What happens when I go home?**

The risk is very small that MDROs will do harm to people in fairly good general health. You do not need to do anything different from anyone else as you go about your normal life at home and when you're out and about. Clothes, bed linen and dishes can be washed as usual. Just as for everybody else, though, we recommend that you are careful about clean your hands thoroughly. Everyone should clean their hands before eating or preparing food. Clean hands protect you and others from the spread of bugs, not just MDROs.

Following good hand hygiene practice all the time helps to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses. When you use the toilet, it is really important that you leave the toilet clean and in the condition that you would like to find it.

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## **Further information**

Please do not hesitate to ask the healthcare staff caring for you if you have any questions, or if you require more information about MDROs. Information on hand hygiene, infection control and managing superbugs at home is available on [www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol](http://www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol) or on [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

## **Note to Healthcare Workers**

This leaflet is for patients who have been identified by the laboratory or the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team as having one of the less common multi drug resistant organisms (MDROs). We have patient information leaflets on MRSA, ESBL, VRE and CPE. Please write the name of the MDRO bug you are discussing with your patient on the line 'Name of bug'.

**This information is approved for use by the HSE's Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control national programme. Text awarded Plain English mark from the National Adult Literacy Agency**

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