

SEPSIS AND MRSA

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infection, or MRSA, is staph infection that has become immune to many types of antibiotics. *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacteria found on our skin and, most of the time, it causes no ill effects. Problems may arise, however, if there is a break in the skin – through a cut, a puncture, or some other opening – that allows the staph to enter into the body.

An untreated MRSA infection may develop into sepsis. Sometimes incorrectly called blood poisoning, sepsis is the body's often deadly response to infection or injury. Sepsis kills and disables millions and requires early suspicion and rapid treatment for survival.

Sepsis and septic shock can result from an infection anywhere in the body, such as pneumonia and urinary tract infections, and viral infections like the flu, as well as from seemingly innocent injuries, like infected bug bites or scratches. Worldwide, one-third of people who develop sepsis die. Many who do survive are left with life-changing effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and fatigue, organ dysfunction (organs don't work properly), and/or amputations.

MRSA INFECTIONS

There are two types of MRSA infections: community acquired (CA) and healthcare acquired (HA). The most common type is HA-MRSA, but CA-MRSA is becoming more common.

RISK FACTORS

Most often, MRSA is spread by skin-to-skin contact or through contact with items contaminated by the bacteria. For example, if you skin your knee on a surface that has the MRSA bacteria, it could enter your body through the new wound. Healthcare-acquired infections are spread by people inside a healthcare facility. They may touch a patient who has MRSA and then transmit the bacteria to another patient. Patients may also contract MRSA in the facility if they touch contaminated objects, such as a bedside table or bed rails.

SYMPTOMS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), MRSA infections usually appear as a bump or infected area on the skin that might be:

- Red
- Swollen
- Painful
- Warm to the touch
- Full of pus or other drainage
- Accompanied by a fever

GROUPS AT RISK

Anyone can develop a MRSA infection, however people with weakened immune systems or chronic illnesses do have a higher risk. MRSA is also spread easily within healthcare settings.

TREATMENT

Although MRSA bacteria is resistant to methicillin, a type of antibiotic, it can often be treated with another type of antibiotic. For MRSA treatment to be effective, the infection needs to be caught and treated as early as possible.

PREVENTION

Not all infections can be prevented, but the chances of spreading infections, including MRSA, can be greatly reduced by following these tips:

- Wash your hands often, particularly if you are in a healthcare facility.
- Keep wounds clean and covered.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as razors.

WHAT IS SEPSIS?

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death.

What are the signs and symptoms of sepsis?

Sepsis is a toxic response to an infection. There is no single sign or symptom of sepsis. It is, rather, a combination of symptoms.

Symptoms can include ANY of the following:

- T** **Temperature:** Higher or lower than normal
- I** **Infection:** May have signs and symptoms of an infection
- M** **Mental Decline:** Confused, sleepy, difficult to rouse
- E** **Extremely Ill:** Severe pain, discomfort, shortness of breath

SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS, CALL 9-1-1 OR GO TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY.

To learn more about sepsis, or to read tributes and survivor stories, visit us online at Sepsis.org



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