**MROs**  
(Multi-Resistant Organisms)

**Infection Prevention**

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**Information for patients**

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*It’s OK to ask: Remind your healthcare worker about cleaning their hands*

**What is a multi-resistant organism?**
Antibiotics are drugs commonly used to kill bacteria. Multi-resistant organisms, or MROs, are bacteria that have become resistant to a number of different antibiotics normally used to treat them.

**What is antibiotic resistance?**
For years, antibiotics have contributed to the effective treatment of bacterial infections such as those that can occur in wounds, the urinary tract, and bloodstream infections.

However, a number of commonly prescribed antibiotics have become ineffective in treating some of these bacterial infections. This is because the bacteria have developed resistance. This has now become a worldwide problem.

**How does antibiotic resistance develop?**
Bacteria can acquire resistance through spontaneous changes in their genetic makeup (DNA). Bacteria can also exchange resistant genes with other bacteria. This means that resistance can spread from one species of bacteria to another, enabling them to develop resistance to different types of antibiotics.

The most commonly seen MROs are:
- MRSA – Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*
- VRE – Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci
- MBL – organisms producing Metallo-Beta-Lactamase,
- CRE – Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae
- CPE – Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae.

One of these organisms may have been identified in a laboratory specimen taken by your healthcare professional. This may be causing you no problems at all, or you may have an infection for which you are being treated.

**How did I get this multi-resistant organism?**
All people have lots of bacteria present on their skin and in their gastro-intestinal tract. This is normal, and the bacteria are usually harmless. However, one of these organisms may have undergone spontaneous changes and become antibiotic resistant.

Sometimes, we may also acquire new organisms from our environment. This is more likely if a person has been unwell and is receiving treatment in hospital.
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Will I always have this multi-resistant organism?
We do not know the answer to this. Sometimes it disappears from your test results but if you become unwell again, it may reappear. This is why at Alfred Health, we often follow extra precautions to help prevent the spread of these types of organisms.

How will I be cared for in hospital?
You may be given a single room. In some circumstances, staff will be required to wear gloves and gowns when caring for you. This is to reduce the likelihood of spreading the infection to other patients these staff are caring for.

Hand hygiene: It is very important that staff, patients and visitors clean their hands every time they enter or leave your room. To clean hands, alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water can be used.

It’s OK to ask: Please feel free to remind your healthcare worker to clean their hands.

Cleaning: The frequency of cleaning and disinfection of your room/ward may increase, with a focus on cleaning of surfaces that are frequently touched.

As a patient, what should I do?
- Always clean your hands before eating, touching your face, or a wound dressing.
- Always clean you hands after going to the toilet, or touching a wound dressing.
- Follow instructions on how to look after any medical devices you may have.

Is my family at risk?
No. These precautions are put in place to reduce the risk of staff spreading the bacteria to other patients that they are caring for. There are no restrictions on close contact such as kissing or hugging your family members. Healthy people are at very little risk of acquiring an MRO.

What happens if I am re-admitted to hospital?
Your medical records will indicate that you may require a single room if you are re-admitted to hospital as an inpatient. The same infection prevention precautions will be followed as last time.
If you are admitted to another hospital, please let them know that you have an MRO.