

Multidrug-Resistant Organisms (MDROs)

Fact Sheet for Residents and Families



What is an MDRO?

- ▶ A multidrug-resistant organism, or MDRO, is bacteria or another organism that is not killed by the antibiotic or other drugs that are meant to treat it.



How are MDROs spread?

- ▶ MDROs can be spread in different ways, including:



On the hands of health care workers, visitors, or family members.



Through contact with body fluids, such as urine, stool, drainage from wounds, saliva, or blood.



Via dirty objects or surfaces, such as bed rails, bedside tables, or medical equipment.



What does it mean to be colonized or infected with an MDRO?

- ▶ If someone is **colonized** with an MDRO, it means that person has the organism in or on their body, but it is not making them sick. These organisms can live in a person's digestive system or on their skin for long periods. A person can still pass the organism to others even if they are not sick.
- ▶ An **infection** means that someone has the organism in or on their body, and it is causing symptoms, such as fever, diarrhea, wound drainage, or fatigue.

Someone who is colonized might later develop an infection and get sick. A person is more likely to become sick if they have long health care stays, have medical devices that go into the body (such as a catheter or ventilator), recently received a transplant, or were in an intensive care unit. Long courses of antibiotics may also make someone more likely to get sick.



If someone has an MDRO, will they need treatment?

- ▶ The person's health care provider will tell them if they need treatment. If the organism is not making them sick, taking medication that is not needed could make the problem worse.



Can someone with an MDRO pass it to their family or visitors?

- ▶ Healthy people are not likely to get this organism. However, someone with an MDRO may pass it to other people that have long health care stays, have medical devices, recently received a transplant, or are in intensive care units.





How long will a person have this organism?

- It is difficult to know how long someone will carry an MDRO. In some people the organism may go away, but in others it may remain for a long time.



What is a resistance gene?

- Some MDROs have a resistance gene, which the organism uses to stop an antibiotic or other drug from killing it. This gene is made by the organism and can be passed to other organisms. This ability to “pass on” resistance to antibiotics is one reason why it is so important to follow the prevention practices shown below when someone is infected or colonized with an MDRO.



How can the spread of MDROs be prevented?

By practicing good hand hygiene

- Wash hands after touching body fluids, commonly used surfaces, and after visiting.



OR



Use hand sanitizer and rub hands together until dry

1. Wet hands

2. Apply soap to all surfaces of the hand

3. Press firmly and rub hands for 20 seconds

4. Rinse

5. Use paper towel to dry hands and turn off water

By using infection prevention precautions

- Residents may be placed on precautions to control the spread of MDROs, which includes staff use of personal protective equipment, such as gowns, gloves, or masks.
- Medical staff will advise if a resident is on any type of precautions and any steps visitors should take during or after the visit.

By cleaning the environment

- Keep the resident's room and everything around the resident clean and tidy.
- Housekeeping staff will clean the resident's room daily using an approved product.



Where can I find more information about MDROs?

- Contact your health care provider or health care team with questions about MDROs.
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage on MDROs in health care settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/organisms.html>.

