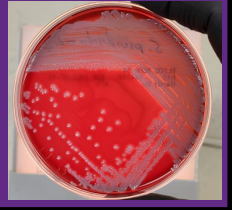




# Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

## Information for Equine Veterinarians

My Equine Patient has been diagnosed with MRSA, now what?



### What is methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*?

- *Staphylococcus aureus* frequently colonizes the skin and noses of people, horses and cattle.
- MRSA is defined by resistance to **oxacillin** and is resistant to all beta-lactams.
- Isolating MRSA in a horse has public health implications because MRSA infections are challenging to treat in animals and people.

### Where did my patient get MRSA?

- MRSA can be spread from a person or horse that is sick (infected) or from a healthy MRSA carrier (colonized).
- Your patient might have already been colonized with MRSA then incurred a wound that became infected.
- MRSA is typically spread through direct contact (skin, nose, mouth, wounds) but can be spread via contaminated hands, surfaces, or equipment in the clinic or barn.

### Is there risk to my staff and other patients?

- With proper personal protective equipment and hand hygiene, the risk of MRSA spread is low.
- Immunosuppressed staff should avoid contact with MRSA-infected horses when possible.
- Everyone can reduce spread by washing hands.
- Anyone concerned about MRSA exposure or illness should contact their healthcare provider.

### How can I treat my equine patient?

- Do **NOT** screen healthy horses for MRSA. Do **NOT** treat colonized horses with no clinical signs; you cannot decolonize a horse.
- Treating infected horses can include antibiotics and fixing underlying conditions (e.g., removing implants).
- Topical mupirocin is often effective.
- Consult with a pharmacologist, microbiologist, or infectious disease specialist as needed for treatment guidance.

### General precautions

- Isolate hospitalized MRSA patients and minimize number of staff caring for them.
- Wear gloves, coveralls/gowns, face shields/masks when handling MRSA horses, and wash hands after all contact. Change clothes if contaminated.
- Conduct procedures on disinfectable floors.
- Use caution not to cross-contaminate your hospital equipment and surfaces.
- Follow manufacturer guidelines for cleaning products (e.g., dilution, storage, contact time).
- If multiple patients are diagnosed with MRSA, consult with your health department about screening your veterinary personnel.

### Where can I find more information?

- Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory  
(785) 532-5650 <http://www.ksvdl.org/>
- MU Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory  
(573) 882-8367 <http://www.ksvdl.org/>
- CDC Information about MRSA  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/index.html>
- CDC MRSA Cleaning and Disinfection  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/environment/index.html>

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