

## Questions and Answers About Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* for Companion Animals

### What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to some antibiotics. Although MRSA is primarily found in people, animals also can carry or be infected with the organism.

### How is MRSA transmitted to people and animals?

Direct skin-to-skin contact is the most common way MRSA is transmitted, but it also can be transmitted by contaminated objects such as bandages from a MRSA-infected wound.

### What are the symptoms of MRSA in animals?

MRSA can cause skin or wound infections.

### Can a pet have MRSA and not be sick?

Yes, pets can be carriers. They may carry MRSA on their skin or in their nose and have no outward signs of illness. This is called colonization with MRSA.

### If a pet has a MRSA infection, what can I do to avoid getting infected?

1. Follow all wound care instructions from your veterinarian.
2. Keep abrasions, cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed.
3. Practice good hand hygiene. Those in close contact with the pet should wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer, especially after changing the infected animal's bedding, bandages or any other objects that may have been in contact with the infected wound.
4. Wear disposable gloves when touching items such as the animal's bedding, bandages or any other objects that may have been in contact with the infected wound. Perform hand hygiene after glove removal.
5. Clean washable items that become soiled with hot water and laundry detergent (use bleach if possible). Drying laundry in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria.

### Suggested cleaning and disinfecting protocol.

1. Remove the animal from the area, as well as food and water dishes, bedding and toys.
2. Clean up animal waste and discard along with any paper towels used to clean up urine and other bodily fluids into a trash bag and seal. Discard the bag.
3. For **kennel floors** and **large cages** mix a solution of 1-ounce Animal Facility Disinfectant to one-gallon of water in a foam gun or pump sprayer. Apply the solution to the floor, sides of the kennel, kennel door and all touch points. Agitate surface if needed (*We recommend the use of brushes and handles made of synthetic material. Wood and natural bristles can absorb moisture and harbor bacteria*). Allow the solution to stand at least 10-minutes. Either rinse and/or squeegee surface to remove any standing puddles and heavy moisture. The animal can be returned to the area as long as there are no standing puddles and/or heavy moisture on the surface.
4. For **small animal cages** fill a properly labeled spray bottle or *Refillable Wiping Towel Canister* with a solution of 1-ounce Animal Facility Disinfectant and 32-ounces of water. Apply the solution to all surfaces areas, including cage doors, handles and other touch points. Agitate the surface if needed. Allow the solution to stand for 10-minutes and wipe up any access moisture. The animal can be returned to the area as long as there are no standing puddles and/or heavy moisture on the surface.
5. For **treatment tables, scales, equipment, etc.** that may have come in contact with an infected pet remove and discard pet hair, wipe up any bodily fluids using a paper towel and discard. Fill a properly labeled spray bottle or *Refillable Wiping Towel Canister* with a solution of 1-ounce Animal Facility Disinfectant and 32-ounces of water. Apply the solution to all surfaces, especially those that may have come into direct contact with an infected animal, open wound or bandage. Agitate surface if needed. Allow the solution to stand 10-minutes and wipe up any excess moisture. An animal can placed on the surface as long as there are no standing puddles and/or heavy moisture.

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