

What is a multi-resistant organism (MRO)?

- A multi-resistant organism (MRO) is a type of infectious agent that has become resistant to a number of different antibiotics normally used in its treatment.
- Because treatment options are limited, it's especially important to stop the spread of MROs.
- Don't be alarmed if a resident or customer is found to have an MRO. Standard work practices to stop the spread of infection are enough to prevent transmission of most MROs.
- Extra measures (e.g. wearing gloves and gowns, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces likely to be touched by the resident/customer) may be needed if the person has an uncovered wound or has trouble with hand hygiene or cough etiquette.

Tips for effective practice

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is the single most important factor in reducing the spread of infections. It is important that it is performed at the right moments.

- Use soap and water if your hands are dirty or you are caring for a resident with vomiting and/or diarrhoea. Alcohol-based hand rub can be used in other situations. After hand hygiene, your hands should be dry.
- Keep your fingernails clean and trimmed, don't wear gel, acrylic or false fingernails and keep jewellery to a minimum.
- Use hand cream regularly (e.g. before going on a break or when off duty) as this helps to keep the skin healthy when regularly washing your hands with soap and water or cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub.
- If skin irritation occurs, tell your supervisor.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Make sure you can access face masks, gowns, aprons and protective eyewear.
- Decide on the type of PPE you need, depending on the risk of exposure to blood or body substances (e.g. wear gloves and a mask if caring for a resident who is sneezing or coughing, wear gloves and a gown if a resident has diarrhoea).
- Change PPE before attending to other residents.

Cleaning

- Follow the cleaning policy and schedule.
- Use detergent and water for general cleaning. Disinfectant is needed as well when infection is known or suspected.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly, when they look unclean and when they have been contaminated.
- Clean general surfaces and fittings when they look unclean and immediately after a spill.
- Clean equipment before using it with another resident — for example, commode chairs, wheelchairs, blood glucose monitoring equipment, blood pressure cuffs, wound dressing trolleys.
- Encourage a tidy environment for resident's rooms and communal areas.

Managing spills

- Clean spills promptly, dispose of contaminated materials and perform hand hygiene.

Multi-resistant organisms

- Use standard precautions (e.g. hand hygiene, gloves and gown if risk of blood or body fluid splash; goggles if high risk of splash to the eyes).
- Ensure items are disposed of into the correct containers.
- Make sure resident's items and equipment stay with them and are cleaned regularly.

Clothing and personal hygiene

- Change own clothing daily or when soiled. Wear short sleeves or roll up sleeves above the elbows.
- Remove clothing that is not washed daily (such as cardigans and jackets) during personal care activities, food preparation and cleaning.
- Wear non-slip closed-in shoes to protect your feet against accidental injury/spillage.
- Always cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Report and observe

- Talk to your supervisor about any aspect of infection control you're not sure about.
- Tell your supervisor if you notice anything that might increase the risk of infection (e.g. inadequate cleaning or a resident who is unwell).

Outbreak management

What is an outbreak?

- Occurrence of more cases of disease than expected in a given area among a specific group.
- Two or more linked cases of the same illness.

What do you do if you identify residents you think may be unwell?

- Tell your supervisor if you have identified any resident you think is unwell, and pay particular attention to note if two or more residents are unwell.
- Talk with your supervisor about procedures in place to manage outbreaks and work with the set procedures. Management of outbreaks may include:
 - increase in frequency of environmental cleaning
 - isolation of residents
 - working closely with local public health unit.
- As a care worker, you can help reduce the outbreak by rigorous adherence to the five moments of hand hygiene, environmental cleaning protocols and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).