

Patient Information Sheet for Multidrug-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (MDRAB)



What is *Acinetobacter*?

Acinetobacter is a group of bacteria commonly found in soil and water. It can also be found on the skin of healthy people. *Acinetobacter* can live for long periods of time. It can live on both wet and dry surfaces in hospitals and nursing homes. *Acinetobacter* can cause serious illness if it enters the body where it is not normally found.

Who is at risk for infection?

Healthy people rarely get serious infections from *Acinetobacter*. *Acinetobacter* infections almost always occur in hospitals or nursing homes. Patients are most likely to become ill if they:

- are in the hospital a long time
- have been in a nursing home or long-term care setting
- have taken antibiotics used to kill bacteria for long periods
- have a disease that affects the body's ability to fight infection
- have medical devices such as urinary catheters or ventilators
- have chronic lung disease or diabetes
- have open wounds

What are multidrug-resistant bacteria?

"Drug-resistant" or "multidrug-resistant" means that bacteria have developed a way of fighting or resisting the antibiotics usually used to kill them. Multidrug-resistant bacteria are more difficult to treat.

How does *Acinetobacter* spread?

Acinetobacter can be spread by person-to-person contact, by contaminated hands, or by contact with contaminated surfaces (door handles, bedside tables, medical equipment, etc.).

How can I help prevent the spread of MDRAB?

Hand hygiene! Take these steps to prevent the spread of *Acinetobacter*:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds, or use an alcohol hand rub.
- Use the alcohol hand rub as long as you cannot see dirt on your hands.
- If you can see dirt on your hands, use soap and water to clean them.
- Clean your hands before you eat.
- Clean your hands with soap and water after you use the bathroom or bedpan.
- Patients should clean their hands before leaving their room.
- Visitors should clean their hands before they enter and before they leave a patient room.
- Visitors should also clean their hands if they help care for a patient.
- Do not hesitate to ask staff or visitors to wash their hands.
- Follow additional instructions from your doctor or nurse to prevent the spread of *Acinetobacter*.

If you have questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "*Acinetobacter* in Healthcare Settings". <http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/acinetobacter.html>
World Health Organization. "MDRAB Fact Sheet". http://www.wpro.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs_20101102/en/index.html

Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE)

350 Capitol Street, Room 125, Charleston, WV 25301-3715
Phone: 304.558.5358 Fax: 304.558.6335 www.dide.wv.gov

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