

RINSES: Recommendations for Eradication of Staph. aureus, particularly MRSA



Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases

Dr. Mark Daniel Hicar, Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo

Since patients with recurrent infections due to MRSA (methicillin resistant staph. aureus) are likely to have MRSA in their noses and on their skin, many physicians try to get rid of MRSA at these places. There is no proven method that works all the time, nor does treatment guarantee that MRSA will not come back. However, many patients experience relief from symptoms after going through a “**RINSES**” protocol such as the one described below.

RINSES stands for **RI**D the MRSA by **INCLUDING** the whole family in a regimen ridding it from your **NOSE**, ridding it from your **SKIN**, and ridding it from you **ENVIRONMENT** all over **SEVEN DAYS**. The hope is that, by following such a protocol as the one below, it RINSES away the troubling abscesses and lesions that one is experiencing.

RI: Rid the MRSA by:

- 1) **N: RINSE the NOSE:** Mupirocin (Bactroban®) ointment, placed on a Q-tip®, and applied just inside the opening of each nostril twice a day for 1 week. It does not burn or sting. Well cover the Q-tip and rotate around the nostril just inside the end of the nose. Make sure to include the very tip area of the nostril as there is usually a natural pocket where Staph is found. When using topical ointments, it is important not to accidentally infect the tube by directly touching from tube to finger to infected area and back to tube. Q-tips work well as single use tools to transfer the ointment. Alternatively, you can squirt out small dabs onto a paper towel prior to application. Particularly for toddlers, there is another N beside the nose...the Nether regions. Studies have shown this age group often has perianal carriage, so application to this area may be recommended as well depending on the age and location of the lesions.
- 
- 2) **S: RINSE the SKIN:** The cheaper alternative is the bleach method. Daily (or every other day) take a bath in a dilute bleach (Clorox®) solution (1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water, or ½ cup bleach in a typical 30 gallon bath of water). Alternatively, daily full body scrub using Chlorhexidine soap (Hibiclens®) has also been used. This is an antiseptic that is often used with surgery patients. It can cause excessive dryness to the skin, particularly in people prone to eczema. Alternatively it can be applied every other day. The bleach baths tend to be better tolerated if this is too drying.
- 
- 3) **E: RINSE the ENVIRONMENT:** While the whole family is following steps 1 and 2, careful laundering of sheets, pillow cases, blankets, pajamas, and other items in close contact with the skin will be helpful. It is recommended that you wash these in a hot water, using bleach if appropriate, and dry them in a hot dryer. It has been shown that MRSA can survive on razors and towels for several days, and on other surfaces (like vinyl, leather, or countertops) for well over a month. Wiping all surfaces with a disinfectant is recommended.

S: Do this for **SEVEN** days. This has been successful for some individuals. Hopefully this RINSES your home: RIDDING MRSA by INCLUDING the whole family in treating the NOSE, SKIN, and ENVIRONMENT over a period of SEVEN DAYS. Discuss with your doctor if the initial trial with this protocol seems to fail. Sometimes including other frequent visitors to the family helps. Some families will do this 2-3 times per year, while others have adopted frequent bleach baths, which are perfectly safe, into a normal regimen. Unfortunately, Staph, such as MRSA, have been in the environment with us for thousands of years and will continue to be there; hopefully we can learn to get along.