

# Why We Screen for Antibiotic-resistant Organisms (AROs)

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*Pourquoi faisons-nous le dépistage des  
organismes antibiorésistants (OA) (FF85-1859)*



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# Why We Screen for AROs

## What are Antibiotic-resistant Organisms (ARO)s?

Sometimes bacteria can develop the ability to no longer be destroyed by antibiotics. When this happens, the bacteria (organisms) are called 'resistant' to antibiotics, and known as antibiotic-resistant organisms (ARO)s.

## How are AROs spread?

- AROs live on hands and objects in the environment.
- AROs are spread by direct contact (touching), usually on caregivers' hands.
- AROs may be on caregivers' hands from touching materials contaminated by an infected person, such as towels, sheets, and bandages.
- **The best way to avoid spreading AROs is to practice good hand hygiene.**

## Screening for AROs

It is important for health care providers to know if you are carrying AROs. This will remind them to take special precautions so they will not spread AROs to other patients.

### Testing for AROs is simple:

- A swab will be taken from the inside of your nose, your groin area, and any open wounds or catheters you may have.
- A swab of your rectum (bum) or a stool specimen (poop sample) may be taken.
- The swabs are taken with a swab stick similar to a Q-tip®.
- The swab will be sent to the lab for testing.

A member of your health care team will tell you if your result is positive.

### Remember:

- Sick people get infections easier.
- Cough into your sleeve, not into your hands.
- Healthy people can spread germs too.



**Wash your hands!**

## **Why do you screen for AROs?**

In the hospital, there are many patients who can get sick easily from an ARO.

Some people may carry AROs and not know it.

Screening tells your health care providers if you are a carrier of these bacteria.

It is important to take special precautions to stop AROs from spreading to other patients in the hospital.

### **These precautions include:**

- You will stay in a single room, when possible (the door can stay open).
- A sign will be placed outside your door to remind others who enter about the special precautions.
- Gloves and a gown must be worn by anyone who provides care for you, as well as family and visitors.
- Your room and the equipment used in it will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Everyone should clean their hands before visiting.
- Everyone who leaves your room, including you, must clean their hands well.

## **What happens if I do not want to be screened?**

You may be considered to be at risk for having an ARO if you were an inpatient in the hospital recently. If you choose not to have screening done, staff will place you on contact precautions while you are in the hospital.

This means that staff will wear gloves and gowns to give you care. Your visitors will also need to follow the instructions given to them.

This is to prevent the possible spread of AROs to other patients.

### **Important:**

The most important thing you can do to help prevent the spread of AROs is to keep your hands clean using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

## Practice good hand hygiene

Staff and visitors are encouraged to practice good hand hygiene before and after they care for or touch you.



Ask your health care provider to show you proper hand hygiene techniques.

Wash your hands for 15 seconds using soap and running water OR use an alcohol-based hand rub until your hands are dry.

### **Remember:**

Washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub is the best way to stop the spread of infection.

