

Going home with an Antibiotic Resistant Organism

What is an Antibiotic Resistant Organism, or ARO?

AROs are bacteria that can cause infection. AROs can sometimes be found on parts of the body without causing an infection. This is called the carrier state.

Antibiotics are used to treat infection caused by bacteria, but AROs are not killed by common antibiotics. There are different AROs. These are:

- MRSA
- VRE
- ESBL
- Multi-Drug Resistant Pseudomonas

How long will it take for the ARO to go away?

This is hard to predict. Sometimes, depending on your health, it will go away in a few weeks, or it could take months or years. It is possible that you may remain a life-long carrier.

Will the ARO come back?

Yes, the ARO and the infection may come back, especially if you get sick and have to take antibiotics again.

I have pets. Can they pick up AROs?

Yes. Pets can carry AROs. They can pass it to you and you can pass it to them. Before and after you pick up and touch your pet you need to wash your hands. You can keep your pets.

Do I need to wash my hands or bathe with special soap at home?

No. Washing with regular soap is fine. A liquid handsoap with a pump is the best for getting rid of bacteria from your hands.

Do I need to eat a special diet at home?

If you have been on antibiotics for a while, your intestines will have lost many of the normal bacteria which grow there and help to keep you healthy. It is important to eat a well-balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables.

Do I need to wash my clothes separately from those of the rest of the family?

Most clothes can be washed with household laundry detergent on a regular cycle. If your clothes are heavily soiled with body fluids, like stool or urine, wash them separately with detergent and bleach.

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Are there special instructions for house cleaning?

Keep a regular cleaning schedule with routine household products. Cleaning products can be bought from any grocery store. The most important rooms to keep clean are the bathroom and the kitchen. If you are not able to do any cleaning, you will need to inform the people who plan your care when you return home.

Do I need to wash my dishes separately?

Dishes can be washed by hand with soap and water or in a dishwasher.

My spouse is sick at home, can he/she get this?

There is a slight chance of spreading AROs to your spouse. Wash your hands well before and after contact with each other.

Will having an ARO affect my activities at home?

We want you to get back to your normal activities. You can visit with friends and family who are in good health. Visitors who are sick may be at risk of getting your ARO. All visitors and household members should wash their hands before and after contact. You can go shopping. You can resume sexual activities. Do not share personal care items.

Is it safe for babies and young children to visit?

If the baby or child is sick, delay the visit until he or she is well. The most important thing you must do is wash your hands well before and after contact. It is okay to kiss and hug babies and children.

If someone helps me with my direct care, do they need to wear gloves and gowns?

Normally, gowns and gloves are not needed. There are times such as changing a dressing on a wound that gowns and gloves are needed. Your nurse will explain to you when gowns and gloves are needed.

What should I do if I need further health care?

When any further health care is needed, please let the health care worker know that you have an ARO. You may still be carrier for your type of ARO even though you feel well and it is causing you no harm. You need to give this information:

- when you go to the dentist
- when you go to a hospital or clinic
- anytime you need to give a medical history

Although healthy people are not a high risk of picking up your ARO, sick people might not be able to fight it off. The greatest risk of spreading your ARO is in the hospital. If you have to go to the hospital, you may need to go into isolation again.