

Patient and Visitor Education about Multidrug-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (MDR Ab)

Acinetobacter (as-i-ne'tō-bak'ter) is a group of bacteria commonly found in soil and water. It can also be found on the skin of healthy people. Acinetobacter species are bacteria that can live for long periods of time in the environment. However, if this organism enters the body where it is not normally found, it may cause serious illness.

Not everyone will get an infection from this organism. Healthy people rarely get serious infections from this organism. Acinetobacter infections rarely occur outside of healthcare settings. Persons most likely to become ill are:

- Patients who are in the hospital a long time
- Patients who have taken many antibiotics used to kill bacteria
- Patients who are taking medications or have a disease that affects the body's ability to fight infection
- Patients who have been in a nursing home or long-term care setting
- Patients who are on ventilators or machines that help them to breathe
- Patients who are very seriously ill

“Drug-resistant” or “multidrug-resistant” means that the organism has developed a means of fighting or resisting the antibiotics usually used to kill them. Infections then become more difficult to treat.

Acinetobacter can live on the skin and may survive in the environment for several days. Hand hygiene, the most important infection prevention procedure, must be performed to prevent spreading the organism from person to person, and from infected objects in the patient's room.

Hand Hygiene Basics for Patients and Visitors:

- 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 do not have dirty hands.
- If you have dirty hands, use soap and water to clean them.
- Clean your hands before you eat.
- Clean your hands after you use the bathroom or bedpan.
- Clean your hands before you leave your room.
- Family and visitors should clean their hands before they enter and leave your room.
- Family /visitors should clean their hands if they help care for you, and before they eat.
- Do not hesitate to ask staff, family or visitors to wash their hands.