



# **MRSA**

**– Methicillin-resistant  
*Staphylococcus aureus***

**Information for workers or visitors to pig stables**

# In 2024 and 2025, MRSA was detected among pigs in Sweden.

This means that those of us working with pigs must be extra careful with hygiene and biosecurity. We need to prevent the introduction of infection into herds, but also ensure not spreading the infection to family members or the wider community.

## Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacterium found in several animal species, including pigs and humans. In most cases it causes no harm, but it can lead to infections in wounds or abscesses. In individuals with a weakened immune system, the bacterium can cause sepsis (blood poisoning). MRSA is resistant to a major and important group of antibiotics, such as penicillin. MRSA can cause the same types of infections as other *S. aureus* strains but may be more difficult to treat and require hospital care. Most often, however, both humans and pigs carry the bacterium without showing any symptoms. Humans who are carriers may have the bacterium on their mucous membranes, for example in the nose or throat.

A carrier may pass MRSA on to another person.

- An antibiotic-resistant bacterium that can be found in both humans and animals.
- Resistant to many common antibiotics, such as penicillin.
- Pigs are usually symptom-free carriers.
- The main concern regarding MRSA in pigs is the risk of transmission to humans.
- Elderly, newborns, weak, or immunocompromised individuals can become seriously ill.

## MRSA– Transmission and Carriage

- The bacterium can be present in the throat and nose without causing symptoms.
- MRSA can become established in pig herds.
- Direct contact (e.g., hand–snout, hand–skin, skin–hand–nose).
- Airborne dust (inhalation to throat/nose; dust on clothes or hair).
- Indirect contact (e.g., via snout restraints, castration cradles or gloves).

## How to Protect Yourself and Others

By changing into clean working clothes every day (including clean socks), washing your hands thoroughly when entering the pig stable, and using respiratory protection as much as possible, you protect both yourself and the herd. Keep your mobile phone in a plastic bag or leave it outside during your time in the stable. Personal clothing should be stored separately and kept free from dust.

MRSA can be present in dust in pig stables. Before leaving the farm, it is important to change clothes, wash used clothing at 60°C, and wash your hands. Shower and wash your hair before leaving. Good biosecurity and hygiene routines reduce the risk of spreading MRSA to family members or the wider community.



## What is good hand hygiene?

- Wash your hands and rub off dirt using warm water and soap.
- Dry your hands with clean paper towels.
- Use hand disinfectant.
- Repeat when entering and leaving the stable, between work shifts, and whenever needed.



## How to use respiratory protection

- The respirator must be single-use and classified as FFP2 or FFP3.
- Respiratory protection must be individually fitted.
- Use a qualified service provider to ensure correct mask fit.
- Replace the mask between each work shift- it is a single-use item!



## When to use disposable gloves

- When in direct contact with pigs.
- Especially when handling blood, wounds, mucus, or pus.
- If you have cuts, injuries or eczema.
- When working with medicines or chemicals.



**Gloves do not replace handwashing!** Do not use gloves unnecessarily, as they may cause skin irritation. Change gloves when they become dirty or after handling a sick pig. Use hand disinfectant when changing gloves, but let your hands dry before putting on a new pair.

## Prevent infection from entering or leaving the stable!



### What risks do you encounter in your daily work?

- Hand hygiene?
- Your mobile phone?
- Clothing change?
- Laundry?
- Shower before going home?

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