What is Acinetobacter?

Acinetobacter is a group of bacteria commonly found in soil and water. It can also be found on the skin of healthy people. Acinetobacter can live for long periods of time. It can live on both wet and dry surfaces in hospitals and nursing homes. Acinetobacter can cause serious illness if it enters the body where it is not normally found.

Who is at risk for infection?

Healthy people rarely get serious infections from Acinetobacter. Acinetobacter infections almost always occur in hospitals or nursing homes. Patients are most likely to become ill if they:

- are in the hospital a long time
- have been in a nursing home or long-term care setting
- have taken antibiotics used to kill bacteria for long periods
- have a disease that affects the body’s ability to fight infection
- have medical devices such as urinary catheters or ventilators
- have chronic lung disease or diabetes
- have open wounds

What are multidrug-resistant bacteria?

“Drug-resistant” or “multidrug-resistant” means that bacteria have developed a way of fighting or resisting the antibiotics usually used to kill them. Multidrug-resistant bacteria are more difficult to treat.

How does Acinetobacter spread?

Acinetobacter can be spread by person-to-person contact, by contaminated hands, or by contact with contaminated surfaces (door handles, bedside tables, medical equipment, etc.).

How can I help prevent the spread of MDRAb?

Hand hygiene! Take these steps to prevent the spread of Acinetobacter:

- 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 cannot see dirt on your hands.
- If you can see dirt on your hands, use soap and water to clean them.
- Clean your hands before you eat.
- Clean your hands with soap and water after you use the bathroom or bedpan.
- Patients should clean their hands before leaving their room.
- Visitors should clean their hands before they enter and before they leave a patient room.
- Visitors should also clean their hands if they help care for a patient.
- Do not hesitate to ask staff or visitors to wash their hands.
- Follow additional instructions from your doctor or nurse to prevent the spread of Acinetobacter.

If you have questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

References