



# Guidance on MRSA 398 in piggeries

## MRSA 398 can be transmitted from animals to humans

MRSA 398 is a resistant staphylococcus bacterium found in some piggeries, which can be transmitted from animals to humans. Therefore, precautions should be taken to minimise the risk of carrying the infection from the piggery to the household. In case of infection, the Danish Health and Medicines Authority's regulations must be followed.

## MRSA 398 in pigs and in dust

Pigs carry MRSA 398 on the skin or in the snout. In the piggery the MRSA 398 will also be in the dust, on all surfaces and in the air. Therefore, one cannot avoid coming into contact with MRSA 398 when being in the piggery. But the risk of becoming infected is highest when working with pigs. Thorough cleaning keeps the dust levels down.

## MRSA can be infectious from human to human

MRSA can be infectious from human to human. A dissemination of between 5-20 per cent among family members to infected persons is experienced.

There are no major risks of eating or handling pig meat.

## Before you leave the stable area - also during breaks

- Clean and disinfect boots - throw covers for shoes away!
- Take your work clothes off!
- Change into clean clothes, kept in an enclosed space so it does not get "contaminated" by MRSA from the dust!
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or even better - take a bath!
- Dry hands in a clean towel - preferably in a paper towel!
- Use hand disinfection with alcohol added glycerol!
- Avoid putting things in and out of the stable area, such as a mobile phone!

## Washing of working clothes

- Wash clothes at 60 degrees in the stable area
- Do not shake the working clothes and avoid mixing with other clothes
- Use hand disinfection immediately after you have touched the working clothes

## The requirements of the Danish Working Environment Authority

- Inform employees about the specific infection risks that may be associated with the work
- Instruct on cleaning the stables, behavior when leaving the stables and washing of work clothes

### WHAT ARE STAPHYLOCOCCI?

Staphylococci (*Staphylococcus aureus*) are bacteria that are common among human beings, some animals and in our environment. A healthy person wearing staphylococci has little risk of getting sick, but the bacteria can cause troublesome infections such as abscesses and impetigo. But the infection can be transmitted to sick and weak persons, and finally staphylococci sometimes cause serious illness such as wound infection or septicaemia. Staphylococci infect usually by close contact with people who carry staphylococci or by touching things contaminated by staphylococci (e.g. door handle and mobile phone).



### WHAT IS MRSA?

MRSA 398 (Methicillin Resistente *Staphylococcus Aureus*) is staph bacteria that are resistant to common staphylococcal penicillin. MRSA produces the same kind of infection that not-resistant staphylococci, described above, but if you are infected you must be treated with special antibiotics. There are many different types of MRSA, and one of the types is MRSA 398.

### WHAT IS MRSA 398?

MRSA 398 is a special type of resistant staphylococci found in domestic animals, especially pigs, which can be transmitted from animals to humans. If you work in a piggery you have therefore the risk of carrying / being infected with MRSA 398. MRSA 398 is only rarely transmitted from human to human. Infections with MRSA 398 should be treated with special antibiotics (common staphylococcal penicillin does not work) and therefore it is important to get examined if you are infected.





- Ensure the preparation of a risk assessment (in Danish called APV), which describes the specific infection risks of working in infected stock and how to prevent infection

### **At regular contact with MRSA 398**

For daily or regular contact with pigs you will be exposed to MRSA 398 again and again. Therefore, you generally only undergo treatment to remove the bacteria if you completely stop working in piggeries.

If household members who do not regularly come into the piggeries are tested positive, it is recommended that they undergo a treatment to get rid of the bacteria.

### **When contacting a doctor / hospital**

If you need a doctor / hospital, it is important to inform them that you are working in a piggery and can be a carrier of MRSA 398. In this way you get the right treatment and the health staff can prevent any further infection.

### **When pregnant**

No increased risk of complications of pregnancy or risk to the fetus in pregnant women carrying the MRSA has been described.

In this connection it should be noticed that 20-30% of all people are carriers of *Staphylococcus aureus*. This does not result in granting prevention with regard to pregnancy or childbirth.

### **Further information**

The Danish Working Environment Authority stipulates the above for employers and also recommends that you follow the Danish Health and Medicines Authority's guidelines. The Danish Health and Medicines Authority's website on: [MRSA, Guidelines on preventing the spread of MRSA and MRSA in pigs](#). The Danish Health and Medicines Authority's ["Information for doctors and for households that have contact with piggeries infected with MRSA"](#).

*These guidelines on MRSA 398 in piggeries have been developed by the Agricultural Council for Safety and Health at Work in collaboration with the Danish Agriculture and Food Council. The guidelines are designed to be pinned in piggeries. It can be obtained at: BAR Farm to Fork and Danish Agriculture and Food Council. The guidelines can also be downloaded from [www.barjordtilbord.dk](http://www.barjordtilbord.dk), [www.lf.dk](http://www.lf.dk) and [www.vsp.lf.dk](http://www.vsp.lf.dk). Any questions, please contact the Agricultural Council for Safety and Health at Work's Secretariat: +45 8740 3400.*

*The Danish Working Environment Authority has viewed the guidelines and finds that the contents comply with the Working Environment Act. The Danish Working Environment Authority has solely assessed the guidelines as they are and has not considered whether it covers all relevant topics within the area in question.*

*In addition, specifications are subject to technological change.*

*The Danish Health and Medicines Authority and SSI have had the guidelines for consultation.*

