How do I disinfect my house if someone in my family has MRSA?

You do not need to disinfect every area in your home every day, but targeted cleaning of surfaces in the kitchen, bathroom, and nursery is appropriate. You will also want to take the additional steps of carrying out targeted disinfection of surfaces that have come in contact with MRSA infections and surfaces that people frequently touch. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Choose a cleaning product with a label that says it is also a disinfectant, and make sure to read the label carefully before using any product. Many disinfectants need to stay in contact with the surface you are cleaning for several minutes; if you just spray the cleaner and then wipe it off with a paper towel right away, it may not work.

- Cleaning can be hard on your hands, causing your skin to become dry or cracked. Wear gloves while doing extensive cleaning, in order to protect your skin. Remember, MRSA usually enters the body through a break in the skin, so extensive cleaning could do more harm than good if you don’t take steps to protect your hands.

- Special attention should be paid to areas that have come into direct or indirect contact with an MRSA infection. For example, if you set a bandage that had been covering an infection on the bathroom counter before throwing it away, you should clean and disinfect that surface.

- Clean areas that people touch often, such as faucet handles and doorknobs.

- Do not share personal items like towels, washcloths and razors

- Launder towels and linens in hot water
Since surface disinfectants kill MRSA effectively, can I help keep myself and my family healthy by using those disinfectants on my own skin? Can I spray my family members or pets with these disinfectants?

This may seem like a logical step to try, but it will actually do much more harm than good. These products are not formulated to be used on humans or animals. They are composed of strong chemicals, and some of them can be absorbed into your body through your skin. They can also irritate your skin or cause it to develop tiny, sometimes invisible cracks, through which MRSA and other bacteria can enter.

For additional information on how to care for family members with MRSA please see:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_multidrugFAQ.html#10

For more information on APUA, visit the Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA):
www.apua.org

*Established in 1981, The Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA) is a non-governmental organization fighting to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics and other antimicrobials.*