**What are multidrug-resistant (MDR) organisms?**
Multidrug-resistant organisms are bacteria and other microorganisms that have developed resistance to antimicrobial drugs. Common examples of these organisms include:
- *Acinetobacter*
- *E. coli*
- *Enterococci*
- *Klebsiella*
- *Salmonella*
- *Staphylococcus aureus* and *intermedius*

**What is the difference between colonization and infection?**
- **Colonization** means that the organism is present in or on the body but is not causing illness.
- **Infection** means that the organism is present and is causing illness.

**What conditions increase the risk of acquiring these organisms?**
There are several risk factors for both colonization and infection:
- Protracted or severe illnesses requiring hospitalization
- Previous exposure to antimicrobial agents
- Invasive procedures such as:
  - Intravenous catheters
  - Urinary catheters
- Weak immune system, seen in animals with underlying diseases as well as very young or old animals

**What precautions should caregivers take for infected animals in their homes?**
- Hand washing is the best way to prevent ongoing transmission.
- Towels used for drying hands after contact should be used only once (e.g. paper towels) or washed after use.
- Disposable gloves may be worn if contact with body fluids such as urine or drainage from abscesses occurs. If gloves are worn, hands should be washed after removal.
- Bedding should be changed and washed on a routine basis especially if it is soiled.
- The ill pet’s environment should be cleaned routinely or when soiled with body fluids (e.g. urine, feces, or abscess drainage).

**Additional Information:**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*This fact sheet is meant to provide basic information. For specific health concerns please contact your physician or veterinarian. Updated 2008.*