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How long ago did Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) develop?

The timeline over which MRSA emerged is as follows:¹

- **Late 1880s:**
Scottish surgeon Alexander Ogston identifies a bacterium, *Staphylococcus aureus*
- **1928:**
British scientist Alexander Fleming discovers the first antibiotic, penicillin
- **1941:**
Penicillin becomes available in the U.S. and England. The first penicillin-resistant *S. aureus* is reported a short time later
- **Late 1940s:**
25 percent of *S. aureus* bacteria in hospitals are penicillin-resistant
- **1958:**
Vancomycin is introduced and is still considered to be the antibiotic of last resort today
- **1959:**
The antibiotic, methicillin, is introduced
- **1961:**
Doctors find the first cases of MRSA
- **2002:**
Doctors first identify vancomycin-resistant *S. aureus* (VRSA) in the U.S. (Michigan² and Pennsylvania³)
- **Today:**
Over 95 percent of *S. aureus* worldwide is penicillin-resistant and 60 percent is methicillin-resistant

¹ Los Angeles Times, 26 February 2006, "Infection is growing in scope, resistance; a virulent staph germ once largely confined to hospitals is emerging in jails, gyms and schools." (Sources: U.S. FDA, Princeton University, Chemical Heritage Foundation, National Academy of Sciences, ActionBioscience.org)

² <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5126a1.htm>

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5140a3.htm>