

MRSA FACT SHEET

WHAT IS MRSA?

MRSA is methicillin-resistant *staphylococcus aureus*, a potentially dangerous type of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics and may cause skin and other infections. As with regular staph infections, recognizing the signs and receiving treatment for MRSA infections in the early stages reduces the chances of the infection becoming severe.

How is MRSA spread?

- Having direct contact with another person's infections
- Sharing personal items, such as towels or razors, that have touched infected skin
- Touching surfaces or items, such as used bandages or tissues, contaminated with MRSA

What are the signs and symptoms?

- A bump or infected area on the skin that may be:
 - Red
 - Swollen
 - Painful
 - Warm to the touch
 - Full of pus or other drainage
 - Accompanied by a fever
- Symptoms of MRSA infection in areas other than the skin include:
 - Fever
 - Tiredness
 - Pain and swelling of the joints or bones
 - And cough when the infection is in the lungs

What if I suspect an MRSA skin infection?

Cover the area with a bandage and contact your healthcare professional. It is especially important to contact your healthcare professional if signs and symptoms of an MRSA skin infection are accompanied by a fever.

How are MRSA skin infections treated?

Treatment for MRSA skin infections may include having a healthcare professional drain the infection and, in some cases, prescribe an antibiotic. Do not attempt to drain the infection yourself – doing so could worsen or spread it to others. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses (even if the infection is getting better), unless your healthcare professional tells you to stop taking it.

How can I protect myself from infection?

- Know the signs of MRSA infections and get treated early.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered.
- Encourage good hygiene such as:
 - Washing hands for 20 seconds at all times.
 - Do not share personal items.
- Know the following:
 - At this point there is no effective and long-lasting way to rid a person of MRSA.
 - Anyone infected with boils, abscesses, or cellulitis should have a culture taken by a health care professional to determine the best antibiotic choice.
 - Persons who DO NOT have the symptoms of infection may be carrying MRSA, even after treatment, and can still spread the infection to others.

Information acquired from www.cdc.gov/MRSA and *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care 2nd edition*.