

MRSA: Instructions

With your Physician:

- Have your physician evaluate skin infections
- If your condition does not improve with medication inform your physician.
- The physician should perform a culture and susceptibility test to determine what bacteria is growing in the wound and whether antibiotics would be necessary and if necessary, which antibiotic would be the most effective to kill the bacteria without much side effects.
- Follow wound care exactly as directed by the physician.
- Give the complete course of antibiotics even if the wound looks healed to prevent re-infection.
- Share information with your employer/school about your condition.

“Hand Washing is
the best way to
prevent spread of
infection”



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Sources and Adaptation:

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Texas Department of Health Services @ www.dshs.state.tx.us
- Mecklenburg County Health Department @ www.meckhealth.org.

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Methicillin Resistant
*Staphylococcus
aureus* (MRSA):
Instructions



PROMOTE • PREVENT • PROTECT

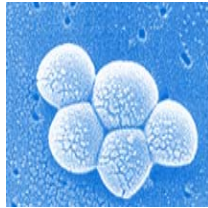


Public Health District

Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA): Instructions

What is Staphylococcus aureus (staph)?

Staphylococcus (staph) is a type of bacteria that lives on the skin (usually armpit, groin, genital area), or the nose, usually without causing any harm. Approximately 25-30% of people have the bacteria, but are not sick. Staph bacteria are a common cause of skin infections as well as more serious conditions such as pneumonia or blood stream infections.



What is MRSA?

In the past, staph infections were easily treated with penicillin antibiotics. MRSA is a staph bacteria which has become resistant to several antibiotics including methicillin due to frequent use of these drugs. While 25-30% of the population is colonized with staph, approximately 1% is colonized with MRSA.

Why is it a cause of concern?

Anyone can get MRSA. Recently, there has been an increase in MRSA in the community, schools, and among athletes and military recruits. These settings involve a lot of direct contact and sharing of items and as such is a cause of concern. **It is estimated that 12% of MRSA cases are now community acquired MRSA.**

What do MRSA infections look like?

MRSA bacteria is found mainly on the skin, the nose, in wounds, blood, and urine. It is most likely to cause skin infections when there is a break in the skin, a cut, or an abrasion through which bacteria can penetrate inside the body. These skin infections can appear red, warm, swollen, painful, or have pus or drainage.

Common skin infections caused by MRSA include:

- Skin sores that look like insect bites
- Boils or Pimples
- Fluid filled blisters (impetigo)
- Abscesses

How is MRSA treated?

MRSA is resistant to many antibiotics and so it can be hard to treat. However, some antibiotics can successfully cure MRSA infections. Many infections may not require antibiotics and can be treated by draining the abscess or boil. See your doctor for proper treatment of skin infections.

Conditions that can lead to spread of MRSA

- Close skin-to-skin contact with someone with MRSA
- Contact with contaminated objects or surfaces
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

How to prevent staph or MRSA infections

Hand washing is the most important step to prevent the spread of MRSA

- With soap and water - Wash your hands for 30 seconds rubbing vigorously all surfaces of wrists, hands, fingers and under fingernails. Turn off faucet with a towel.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer- Apply the required amount and rub your hands thoroughly until hands are completely dry.

When to wash your hands

- After any contact with bodily secretions, after sneezing, coughing, blowing your nose, rubbing your eyes, eating or using the restroom.
- After any contact with contaminated objects.
- If hands are dirty or soiled.
- After handling animals
- Before and after touching or caring for a wound.



General Precautions

- Do not share soap, towels, or other personal items.
- Do not share topical creams or antibiotics.
- Do pre-wash or rinse items that have been grossly contaminated with bodily fluids and then wash them with hot water and normal detergent and dry them on the hottest setting.
- Do wash utensils and dishes in the usual manner with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- Do inform employers/schools if you have a skin infection.
- Soiled laundry should be carried in a plastic or a waterproof container and hands should be washed properly after loading them in the washer.
- Disinfectants or bleach solutions (1:100 bleach and water mix or 1 tablespoon bleach in 1 quart of water) should be used daily to clean all non-clothing items which have come in contact with the infected person. Bleach solution is ineffective after 24 hours so it should be made daily.
- Phenol-containing sprays such as Lysol should be used to disinfect cloth or upholstered surface.

How to take care of wounds at home:

- The infected person should avoid direct contact with others until the wound is healed. Do not permit an infected child to share a bed with other family members.
- Keep the wound covered.
- Wound care including change of dressings should be done exactly as directed by the physician.
- Always use clean gloves before touching the wound and dispose of these gloves before touching any other thing. Wash hands thoroughly after removing gloves.
- Change gloves when touching another body site or another person.
- Throw the contaminated material in a separate bag and close the bag before throwing it in the regular trash.
- If possible use disposable equipment, but if using reusable items such as scissors and tweezers, they should be washed with soap and water, then wiped with 70% isopropyl alcohol and allowed to air dry.