

## **What is MRSA?**

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. Staphylococcus, often referred to as “staph”, are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Methicillin is an antibiotic. Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus are bacteria that have become resistant to treatment by this antibiotic.

## **How is MRSA spread?**

MRSA is transmitted mainly by direct contact with a person who has an infection with this bacteria. Your skin provides a great barrier against the invasion of bacteria into the body. Any break in the skin can allow bacteria to enter the body. Anyone with a break in their skin who has direct contact with someone who has MRSA is at risk for developing this infection.

## **What does a MRSA infection look like?**

MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered with hair. MRSA is sometimes misdiagnosed as a spider bite.

## **How is MRSA treated?**

MRSA should always be treated by your health care provider. A culture may be taken of the area. Antibiotics may be prescribed. The infection may be drained. You should never attempt to drain these areas at home as this can cause the bacteria to spread deeper in the skin. The area should always be covered with a dry dressing. Your health care provider may instruct you to use antibacterial soap, and put antibiotic ointment in your nose and under your fingernails for a period of time to cut down on bacteria.

## **What are the schools doing to cut down on the spread of MRSA?**

Students with MRSA are not excluded from school, unless a health care provider requires exclusion. Any student diagnosed with MRSA is excluded from contact sports until cleared by his doctor. All MRSA infections must be treated with an antibiotic ointment and covered by a clean dry dressing. All cuts and scrapes are treated in the same manner to prevent infection. Our athletic areas are cleaned daily and a thorough once a week cleaning is done with a strong disinfectant. Air filters are changed frequently. Once a month the field house is cleaned with a disinfectant fog. Towels are washed in hot water using bleach. Game clothing are washed in hot water. All personal items are sent home with the student to be washed in hot water.

## **How can you keep MRSA from spreading to others?**

Good hand washing is the number one defense against the spread of bacteria. A good reminder of how long to wash your hands is to sing “Happy Birthday To You” while washing your hands, as this song is the appropriate length of time you need to wash your hands adequately. Avoid sharing personal items (towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin.

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