

MRSA or Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus

About MRSA:

MRSA or Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus is a type of skin infection that is resistant to certain types of antibiotics. Research indicates 85% of all serious cases of the infection are associated with health care settings, while the remaining 15% of reported infections are considered community-acquired.

MRSA infections are generally spread by skin-to-skin contact or by direct contact with the drainage from an infected wound. Community-associated MRSA can be spread occasionally by contact with contaminated surfaces or items such as sports equipment or personal hygiene items.

Symptoms of MRSA:

Community-acquired MRSA skin infections appear as pus-filled bumps, boils or “spider bites” which often are red, swollen, painful or have drainage.

Treatment for MRSA:

Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated with or without antibiotics and by draining any pus. More serious infections are very rare in healthy people. Report any suspicious skin infection to your health care provider immediately.

Steps to prevent MRSA:

- Practice good hygiene by washing hands regularly with warm water and soap or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed.
- Avoid sharing personal items like towels, razors, soap or make-up, items that come into contact with the skin.
- Shower immediately after exercise.
- Maintain a clean environment by cleaning with detergent-based cleaners or standard disinfectants any surfaces and equipment that may come into direct contact with the skin.
- People with active infections should be excluded from activities with skin-to-skin contact until healed.
- When MRSA skin infections occur, surfaces that are likely to contact uncovered wounds should be cleaned.

Correcting common misconceptions:

- Unless directed by a physician, people with MRSA infections should not be excluded from work or school. Exclusion should be reserved for those with wound drainage that cannot be contained with a clean, dry bandage.
- It is not necessary to close buildings because of an MRSA infection.
- It is not necessary to inform all work or school colleagues about an MRSA infection.

For more information on MRSA, visit the Tennessee Department of Health Web site at <http://health.state.tn.us/MRSA/index.htm> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html.



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