

Staphylococcus Aureus or MRSA Infection

WHAT IS IT? Staph (staphylococcus aureus) is a type of bacteria. It may cause skin infections that look like pimples or boils. Skin infections caused by Staph may be red, swollen, and/or painful or have pus or other drainage. Some Staph (known as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus or **MRSA**) are resistant to certain antibiotics, making it hard to treat. The information on this page applies to both Staph and MRSA.

HOW IS IT SPREAD? People are more likely to get a Staph infection if they have:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

WHEN IS IT CONTAGIOUS? Most Staph skin infections are minor and may be easily treated. Staph also may cause more serious infections, such as infections of the bloodstream, surgical sites, or pneumonia. Sometimes a Staph infection that starts as a skin infection may worsen. It is important to contact your doctor if your infection does not get better.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED AND TREATED? Staph is diagnosed by its MRSA infection can only be diagnosed by culture and antibiotic susceptibility testing. Treatment for a Staph skin infection may include taking an antibiotic or having a doctor drain the infection. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save them to use later. Cover the wound and keep bandage clean and dry.

SHOULD THE CHILD STAY HOME? Unless directed by a physician, students with Staph or MRSA infections should not be excluded from school. Students who have draining wounds that can not be covered should be excluded until the infection is healed or it can be covered and contained.

HOW CAN WE LIMIT THE SPREAD?

- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep your cuts and scrapes clean and cover them with bandages.
- Do not touch other people's cuts or bandages.
- Do not share personal items like towels, sports equipment, or razors.