

MRSA – FACT SHEET

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for **methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus***. ‘Staph’ causes an infection that is resistant to several common antibiotics. There are two types of infection. Hospital-associated MRSA (HA-MRSA) happens to people in healthcare settings. Community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) happens to people who have close skin-to-skin contact with others.

What type of infections does MRSA cause?

In the community most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, and 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 by hair (e.g., back of neck, groin, buttock, armpit, beard areas of men) and may be mistaken for a spider or insect bite. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

How is MRSA spread?

It is usually spread through direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else’s infection (e.g., towels, used bandages). Community-associated MRSA lives on the skin and can survive on objects for 24 hours or more.

In what settings do MRSA skin infections occur?

MRSA infections can occur anywhere. Some settings have factors that make it easier for MRSA to be spread such as schools, dormitories, military barracks, health clubs, correctional facilities, playgrounds and daycare centers.

How is MRSA treated?

Early treatment of suspected MRSA is *important*. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

Is it possible that a staph or MRSA skin infection will come back after it is cured?

Yes, it is possible to have a staph or MRSA skin infection come back after it is cured. To prevent this from happening, follow your healthcare provider’s directions during treatment. Follow the prevention steps after the infection is gone.

How can the spread of CA-MRSA be prevented?

- ✓ Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- ✓ Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- ✓ Avoid contact with another people’s wounds or bandages.
- ✓ Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or wash clothes, razors, bars of soap, personal clothing, hair care or deodorant products.
- ✓ Do not pop boils or pimples.
- ✓ If available, use gloves when handling any draining wounds.
- ✓ Avoid whirlpools or common tubs with open wounds, scrapes or scratches.
- ✓ Disinfect surfaces of exercise equipment before and after use.

What should I do if someone I know has a staph or MRSA infection?

If you know of someone that has a staph or MRSA infection you should follow the prevention steps.

What should I do if I think I have a staph or MRSA infection

See your healthcare provider.