



METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)

What is MRSA?

Staphylococci or “staph” are bacteria that commonly live in the noses and on the skin of healthy people. Usually, the bacteria does not cause any harm. When it does, only minor infections generally occur. Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) are specific strains (or types) of bacteria that frequently cause skin infections that have become resistant to some but not all antibiotics. Resistance means that the bacteria does not respond to commonly used antibiotics.

MRSA infections can occur in people of all ages in the community, including schools, daycare centers, play groups, military barracks, correctional facilities, and households.

What does MRSA look like? How is it spread?

“Staph” skin infections often begin when the bacteria enters the body through an opening in the skin. Common signs of any skin infection include redness, warmth, and swelling, tenderness of the skin, and boils or blisters. MRSA is often mistaken for a “spider bite”.

It’s important to know that not all skin infections are caused by MRSA. Not all skin infections are antibiotic-resistant. Only specific testing can identify the specific type of “staph” germ causing the infection.

MRSA can be transmitted through prolonged skin to skin contact or through surfaces or objects recently contaminated with drainage from an open lesion (sore).

How is MRSA treated?

Prompt medical attention is essential for any suspicious wound or lesion of the skin. Antibiotics may not always be prescribed as treatment of a “staph” skin infection, including MRSA. Sometimes, incision and drainage (opening the lesion to drain the infection) is the only necessary treatment. It is important to follow the physician’s instructions and keep him or her informed of any changes. As always, if antibiotics are prescribed, take them as prescribed and finish ALL doses

How can “Staph” skin infections be prevented?

Good handwashing and hygiene practices, along with education, are keys to the prevention and control of illness, including MRSA in schools and non-school settings. Mass screenings, cancellation of extracurricular activities or closing of schools or other facilities are not recommended as measures to reduce the spread of infection.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
SCHD Communicable Disease Unit 330-375-2662
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com
Minnesota Department of Health www.health.state.mn.us