



What is Staphylococcus Aureus?

- The bacteria “Staph” is one of the most common causes of skin infections.
- Staph is usually found on the skin or in the noses of healthy people. This is called colonization.
- The majority of Staph infections are minor (pimples and boils)

What is MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)?

- MRSA is a type of Staph germ that is hard to treat with some commonly used antibiotic medicines. It has developed resistance to certain antibiotics designed to kill the germ
- Because of resistance, MRSA can be hard to treat and can lead to life-threatening blood or bone infections.

What does an MRSA infection look like?

- It is often misdiagnosed as a spider bite.
- Symptoms may include redness, warmth, swelling, pus, skin tenderness, pimples, boils, or blisters.
- MRSA-infected skin lesions (sores) can change from skin or surface irritations to abscesses or serious skin infections.
- If left untreated, MRSA can infect blood and bones.

How is MRSA spread?

- MRSA lives on skin and survives on objects and surfaces for more than 24 hours.
- Drainage (pus) from skin sores can spread bacteria to other body parts or other people.
- MRSA infections can be found in crowded places, ex. Schools, gyms and jails
- MRSA is almost always spread by direct, physical contact.
- MRSA is also spread through touching objects such as towels, sheets, workout areas and sports equipment that have MRSA germs on them.

How do I know for sure that I have MRSA?

- A sample of the infected wound is used to grow the bacteria in the microbiology laboratory. This is called a culture.
- The bacteria are then tested to see which antibiotics will effectively treat the infection.
- If the cultured bacteria cannot be killed with standard antibiotics then the infection is called MRSA

What kind of treatment can I get for my MRSA infection?

- Many MRSA infections can be treated by draining the abscess or boil
- Only healthcare providers should drain sores.
- Always keep drained sores covered to prevent others from getting sick.
- Most MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If your case is severe, you may need very strong antibiotics that can only be given in a hospital.



How can I prevent MRSA infections?

According to the CDC, practicing the following good hygiene will help prevent skin infections:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water.
- Keep your fingernails short to keep bacteria from growing under your nails.
- Keep cuts clean and covered with a proper dressing or bandage until they are healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, uniforms and sports equipment that directly touches your body.
- Clean and disinfect objects (such as gym and sports equipment) before use.
- Wash dirty clothes, linens and towels with hot water and laundry detergent. Using a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria.
- Avoid using unnecessary antibiotics (this can encourage antibiotic resistance).
- If you have an active infection:
 - DO NOT participate in contact sports
 - DO NOT go to a public gym, sauna, hot tub, or pool
 - DO NOT get manicures, massages, or hair cuts

What if I or members of my household are getting repeat abscesses?

You and members of the household may be colonized with MRSA – discuss this with your physician.

To remove the colonization of MRSA, each householder should:

- Apply Bactroban (mupirocin) ointment (as prescribed by your doctor) in the nose. Use a clean Qtip each time to apply inside both nostrils twice a day for 1 week.
 - 1) Put ¼ inch dab of ointment on a cotton swab (Qtip)
 - 2) Insert the swab as far into your nose as you can tolerate
 - 3) Gently rub the swab on the inside of your nostril
 - 4) Using a new swab repeat with the other nostril
 - 5) Dispose of the swaps
 - 6) Wash your hands
- Wash all clothes/sheets in hot water. Disinfect surfaces with a cleaner or bleach based solution regularly (*Mix one tablespoon bleach + 1 quart water into a spray bottle. Do not mix with other cleaners, especially ammonia*)
- If prescribed an oral medication for treatment of an abscess/skin infection – complete the antibiotic as prescribed.
- Wash hands frequently using antibacterial soap. Supplement with 60% ethanol based hand gel between hand washings.
- Use an antiseptic body wash when bathing daily. (e.g. Hibiclen, avoid ears, eyes, mouth and nose)
- Soak in a bleach bath twice a week (mix ¼ cup Clorox bleach in bathtub water)
- Consider if your pet has any signs of a skin infection and discuss this with your vet. Pets with MRSA can be treated.

For more information:

The Center for Disease Control
En Español

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html
www.cdc.gov/spanish/especialesCDC/SARM/

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