

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



MRSA

(Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus)

What is MRSA?

Some staph bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics such as methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. While 25% to 30% of the population has had a staph infection, approximately 1% is colonized with MRSA.

Who gets MRSA?

Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals, healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) and correctional facilities who have weakened immune systems. These healthcare-associated staph infections include surgical wound infections, urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia.

How is MRSA spread?

Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

What do MRSA infections look like?

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

How is MRSA treated?

Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If you are given an antibiotic, 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 unfinished antibiotics to use at another time.

However, many staph skin infections may be treated by draining the abscess or boil and doctors generally give antibiotics. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

If after visiting your healthcare provider the infection is not getting better after a few days, contact them again. If other people you know or live with get the same infection tell them to go to their healthcare provider.

How can MRSA be prevented?

Practice good hygiene:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
- Avoid IV Drug Abuse

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HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS

Use SOAP and RUNNING WATER

RUB your hands vigorously for 20 seconds

WASH ALL SURFACES, including:

- backs of hands
- wrists
- between fingers
- under fingernails

RINSE well

DRY hands with a paper towel

Turn off the water using a PAPER TOWEL instead of bare hands

For more information on MRSA, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health or contact:

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