

MRSA

methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

a guide for parents

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* (often called “staph”) is one of many bacteria that normally reside in or on humans and does not usually cause infection. MRSA is a type of staph infection that is resistant to treatment with methicillin and other antibiotics in the penicillin family.

MRSA is typically seen as a skin infection that is red, swollen, warm and tender, and may look like a spider bite or infected hair follicle.

MRSA is usually transmitted from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. It can also be transmitted when a person’s broken, infected skin touches a surface, and then the same surface is touched by another person’s broken skin.



RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

Ohio Department of Health (ODH):

www.odh.ohio.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/schools/

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm

Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

John R. Kasich, Governor
Richard Hodges, Director of Health



www.odh.ohio.gov

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Some things you shouldn't share

The best way to prevent MRSA is good hygiene

THE ROLE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Staph bacteria, including methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), have become resistant to some antibiotics over time due to improper use and overuse of antibiotics. Using antibiotics properly helps prevent new drug-resistant illnesses from occurring and keeps antibiotics working well.

Wash bedding
and towels
in **HOT** water



HOW IS MRSA TREATED?

An infection must be cultured by a health care provider to tell if it is MRSA. Sometimes MRSA can be treated by only incision and drainage of the wound. Some, but not all, infections may need treatment with an appropriate antibiotic.

If you or your child has a MRSA infection, follow the directions of your health care provider. In general, you should keep the infected area clean and dry and keep a bandage on the infection if it is draining. Change the bandage when it becomes:

- Wet or dirty
- Soaked with pus
- Loose

Always wash your hands after touching the bandage or infection. Throw the used bandage away immediately.



HOW IS MRSA PREVENTED?

The best way to prevent MRSA is good hygiene. Parents and children need to follow good hygiene practices to prevent many illnesses. These include:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Cleaning any breaks in the skin, such as cuts, and covering them with a bandage until healed
- Bathing regularly, especially after athletic competition or other skin-to-skin contact
- Changing bedding and towels often and washing in hot water and drying thoroughly
- Not sharing personal items such as towels, razors or toothbrushes
- Seeing your health care provider and following instructions if you have an infection



PROPER USE OF ANTIBIOTICS INCLUDES:

- Always taking antibiotics as directed
- Not skipping doses
- Taking antibiotics until they are gone
- Not sharing or saving antibiotics
- Not taking antibiotics prescribed at any other time or for any other illness
- Not insisting on antibiotics for a viral illness
(Antibiotics are effective only against bacterial illnesses)

