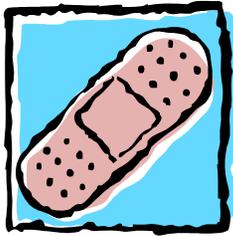


## How can MRSA infections be prevented?

- Keep all MRSA wounds or sores covered with a clean, dry dressing.
- Good hygiene can prevent MRSA infections. Good hygiene includes:
  - ✓ Careful handwashing
  - ✓ Cleaning and disinfecting items such as gym and sports equipment
  - ✓ Washing clothing and linens in hot water with detergent
  - ✓ Drying clothes and linens in a hot dryer instead of line drying
  - ✓ Avoiding unnecessary use of antibiotics



## Why does MRSA keep coming back in some people?



When someone has a MRSA infection, the germs may continue to live on (colonize) the body even after the infection heals. If so, these MRSA germs could later cause an infection at another site on the body.

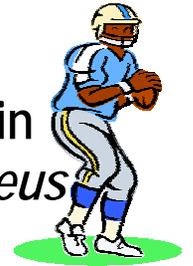
## What can be done to avoid developing resistant bacteria?

- Do not overuse antibiotics. Antibiotics will not help many common viral infections.
- Take ALL of the antibiotic pills or capsules recommended by your doctor. It is important to completely eliminate the infection. Don't save some of the antibiotics. Throw unused antibiotics away! Leftover antibiotics may not work against bacteria that cause another infection in the future.



# MRSA

## Community Acquired Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

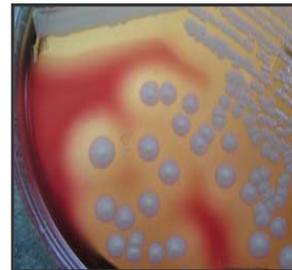


### What is *Staphylococcus aureus*?

It is a type of germ (bacteria), often called "staph," that is a common cause of skin infection. It may also be found on the skin or in the noses of healthy people. Most staph infections are minor, but staph *can* cause more serious infections, including bloodstream and wound infections. Serious infections may require strong antibiotics for treatment.

### What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*, which is a staph that has become resistant to some commonly used antibiotics. MRSA infections can be treated, but different antibiotics have to be used.



### What is the difference between Community Acquired and Hospital Acquired MRSA?

Most community MRSA (CA-MRSA) infections are skin infections and usually occur in *healthy* people who have not been in the hospital or had a recent medical procedure. On the other hand, hospital or healthcare acquired MRSA infections usually develop in people that are very sick, elderly, or have an open wound. These infections can be very serious.

### What does "resistant" mean?

When bacteria are resistant to an antibiotic, it means the antibiotic does not work to treat infections caused by *that* type of bacteria.

Most staph are resistant to older antibiotics like penicillin. This resistance is to antibiotics only, not to cleaners used on floors and countertops.

### What is the difference between colonization and infection?

Colonization means that MRSA is present on or in the body without causing illness. Infection means that MRSA is making the person sick. People who are colonized or infected can spread the bacteria to other people.

### What does a MRSA infection look like?

Most MRSA infections are skin infections and may be mistaken for a "spider bite." The infected area may be red, warm, swollen and painful to the touch. Pus may drain from the area. Other skin or soft tissue infections caused by MRSA may include boils, furuncles, or abscesses. In rare cases, the infection may spread throughout the body to cause a serious infection. MRSA may also cause lung infections, especially in people who are recovering from influenza ("the flu").



### Where did MRSA come from?

*Staphylococcus aureus* has caused infections in humans for years. After antibiotics were discovered, these infections could be treated and healed. Then antibiotics were used too freely, and *now* many antibiotics are not effective against staph anymore.

MRSA infections were first seen in hospitals in the elderly and very ill patients. Now MRSA infections are seen in the community, in schools, fitness centers, daycares and at home in healthy people.

### How is MRSA spread?



You can get MRSA by touching someone who has a MRSA infection and especially by contact with the drainage from an infected wound. MRSA may also be spread by touching an object that has been contaminated by infected drainage from a person with MRSA infection. Occasionally you can get MRSA by touching someone who is only colonized with MRSA. Open sores or wounds caused by MRSA should be covered at all times to prevent others from getting sick with MRSA infection.

### How do you know an infection is caused by MRSA?

A physician will look for the classic signs of an infection such as redness, heat, swelling or pus. Some MRSA infections look like a "spider bite" with a dark purple center. If there is drainage from the wound or lesions, some of the drainage can be sent to the lab to test for MRSA.



### What is the treatment for MRSA?

Many MRSA infections can be treated by draining the boil or abscess and do not require antibiotics. **ONLY HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS SHOULD DRAIN SORES!** Most MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics by mouth. If the infection is severe, stronger antibiotics may be required, and the infected person may need to be hospitalized to take those antibiotics by intravenous (IV) method.

