

MRSA Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus



What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus or Staph is a type of bacteria. Some Staph, known as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA, are resistant to certain antibiotics. This makes it harder to treat. Any open, weeping, or pustule lesion on the skin (other than acne) should be referred to a physician for consultation.

What are the signs and symptoms of MRSA?

Most MRSA infections are skin infections that appear as pustules or boils. They are often red, swollen, painful, and have pus or other drainage. These infections are common at sites with cuts and abrasions and areas of the body covered by hair.

How is it spread?

MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact with someone who has the infection or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection (towels, bandages, etc.).

How do you keep it from spreading?

Always practice good hygiene – wash hands well with soap and water, shower and wash with soap as soon as possible after all athletic practices and competitions. Keep cuts and sores clean and covered with a dry bandage. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, razors, and individual use bars of soap. Clothing and uniforms should be laundered with hot water and laundry detergent. Dry items in a hot dryer. Make sure there is an established cleaning procedure for surfaces that come into direct contact with people's skin, such as weight training equipment.

MRSA in schools:

MRSA generally does not spread through a classroom environment. Transmission of MRSA infection among athletes is more common. Because bandages can shift or dislodge with activity or when they become wet, students with draining wounds should not participate in PE classes, practices, or games until the wound has stopped draining. Complete healing may be recommended for wrestlers due to the skin-to-skin contact of the sport. Illinois Department of Public Health rules prohibit the use of licensed swimming pools by anyone with a skin infection. Students may participate in non-contact activities such as running or jogging, providing the wound can be covered at all times with a clean, dry, intact bandage taped on all 4 sides, and good hygiene practices are observed. Typically, it is not necessary to inform the entire school community about a case of MRSA infection. Parents of students on an athletic team should be notified when a confirmed case (lab confirmed through a physician's office, not self-reported) has been identified. The local health department can assist with factually correct notification and maintaining the student's confidentiality.

Exclusion:

Someone with a MRSA infection generally does not need to be excluded as long as the area can be covered and contained by a clean, dry bandage and maintain good personal hygiene