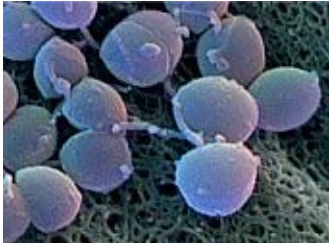


## TAKING CONTROL

## Staph Infections: MRSA



**MRSA (methicillin-resistant *S. aureus*).** In light of the recent outbreaks of MRSA in schools across the nation, it just makes sense to stay informed. Find

out what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had to say about MRSA infections.

**First of all, what is MRSA?** MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*). *Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as “staph,” are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Some *S. aureus* are resistant to the class of antibiotics that are frequently used to treat staph such as methicillin- and thus are called methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA).

**Who gets MRSA?** *S. aureus* (staph) including MRSA can be spread among people having close contact with infected people. MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact and not through the air. Spread may also occur through indirect contact by touching objects (e.g., towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, workout areas, or sports equipment) contaminated by the infected skin of a person with staph bacteria or MRSA. Just as *S. aureus* can be carried on the skin or in the nose without causing any disease, MRSA can be carried in this way also. This is known as colonization.

MRSA infections are usually mild, superficial infections of the skin that can be treated successfully with proper skin care and antibiotics. MRSA, however, can be difficult to treat and can progress to life-threatening blood or bone infections because there are fewer effective antibiotics available for treatment.

*“If my doctor or healthcare provider has told me that I have an MRSA skin infection, what can I do to prevent others from getting infected?”*

You can prevent spreading an MRSA infection to those you live with or others around you by following these steps:

1. **Keep infections**, particularly those that continue to produce pus or to drain material, covered with clean, dry bandages. Follow your healthcare provider’s instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain MRSA and spread the bacteria to others.
2. **Advise your family** and other close contacts to wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water, especially if they change your bandages or touch the infected wound or potentially infectious materials.
3. **Avoid sharing personal items** (e.g., towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms) that may have had contact with the infected wound and potentially infectious material. Wash linens and clothes that become soiled with hot water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.
4. **Tell any healthcare providers** who treat you that you have an antibiotic-resistant staph skin infection.

*NOTE: The information presented in this article was taken from the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other medical professional if you have questions about any medical condition, diagnosis or treatment.*