



Wicomico County Health Department

MRSA FACT SHEET

WHAT IS MRSA?

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics called beta-lactam, such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin.

WHAT IS STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (STAPH)?

Staphylococcus aureus, or "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Most staph infections are minor and can be treated without antibiotics; however staph bacteria can cause serious infections such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia.

WHAT DOES STAPH OR MRSA INFECTION 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.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-ASSOCIATED MRSA?

MRSA infections that are acquired by persons who have not had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheters) or been hospitalized within the past year or are known as CA-MRSA infections. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as minor skin infections and occur in otherwise healthy people.

WHO GETS STAPH OR MRSA INFECTIONS?

Anyone can get MRSA or staph infections.

HOW COMMON ARE STAPH & MRSA INFECTIONS?

Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the U.S. and a common cause of pneumonia, surgical wound infections, and bloodstream infections. The majority of MRSA infections occur among patients in hospitals or other healthcare settings; however, MRSA is becoming more common in the community setting.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE MRSA INFECTION?

See your healthcare provider.

WHO IS AT INCREASED RISK OF INFECTION?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has investigated clusters of CA-MRSA skin infections among athletes, military recruits, children, Pacific Islanders, Alaskan Natives, Native Americans, men who have sex with men, and prisoners. 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.

HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISK OF MRSA INFECTION?

Practicing good hygiene reduces your risk:

- *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 dry bandage until healed.*
- *Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.*
- *Avoid sharing personal items like towels or razors.*
- *Clean commonly touched areas with a disinfectant.*

ARE STAPH AND MRSA INFECTIONS TREATABLE?

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.

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT STAPH OR MRSA SKIN INFECTION WILL COME BACK AFTER IT IS CURED?

It is possible to have a recurrence of staph or MRSA skin infection after it is cured. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions to reduce the risk of recurrence.

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Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention