
Fact Sheet

MRSA

Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a staph infection, caused by bacteria, that is resistant to many antibiotics. It was, and is, common in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and long-term care facilities.

What does MRSA look like?

Typically it will resemble a spider bite, or a boil or a pimple: It can be red, swollen, and painful and may be seeping or draining pus or other fluids. However, MRSA can also infect cuts or abrasions, thus not resembling a bite or boil.

How is MRSA spread?

Direct skin-to-skin contact is the most frequent method. That is why it is more common in athletes, such as football players and wrestlers. It can also be spread by contact with surfaces, such as desks, computers and doorknobs, where the infection can be left behind and can live for about 24 hours.

How can MRSA be prevented?

Good personal hygiene is the best method. Frequent hand washing and daily baths or showers are most effective. Also, don't share items such as clothing, towels, and razors, where the bacteria may be left behind. At times, wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants may also protect your skin from the bacteria. Additionally, all cuts and wounds should be cleaned and dressed, and observed for possible infection.

Is MRSA serious?

In some cases MRSA can be very serious, even life threatening. However, in most cases it does respond to treatment with an antibiotic.

Is my child in danger in a school or a childcare center?

MRSA can be spread in a school or daycare setting. Teach your child proper hand washing and hygiene, and teach them not to touch the sores or wounds of other children.

Should the school or childcare center close if there is a case?

No. Closing a school or daycare center will not eliminate MRSA. Infected children will only bring it back when the facility re-opens. However, schools and childcare centers should clean and sanitize surfaces daily; promote good hand washing and hygiene; and ensure that children who may have sores or wounds have them covered.

As a parent, what can I do?

If your child has a suspicious sore, take him/her to your family physician. Be sure to cover sores before sending your child to school. Also, never send your child to school or daycare when they are ill. That will only make other children sick.

Where can I find more information?

The Ross County Health District maintains updated information and links on our Web site, at www.rosscountyhealth.com. Also, we have information in our Vital Statistics Office (where you get birth and death records), Rm. 5A, 475 Western Ave., Chillicothe, Ohio.