

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- □ Because you or your child may have been exposed to MRSA.
- □ For informational purposes only.

General Information About MRSA

What is MRSA?

- MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is just one type, or strain, of a common bacteria called Staphylococcus ('staph').
- MRSA can grow easily and cause an infection.
- This strain of bacteria is resistant to treatment with some antibiotics.
- It is rare, but sometimes a MRSA infection can lead to more serious infections like pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

Who can get it?

- It is most common among people who live in nursing homes or are hospitalized.
- People who are healthy and have not been in the hospital or lived in a nursing home can also get a MRSA infection. This is called community-associated MRSA.

What are the symptoms?

- A MRSA infection of the skin can look like a bug or spider bite at first and then develop into pusfilled bumps.
- The bumps and sores are often red, warm, painful, swollen, and have a yellow or white center that contains pus or other drainage.
- Some people may have chills and a fever (American Academy of Pediatrics defines fever as a temperature of 100.4°F [38°C] or higher).

How is it spread?

- The bacteria are found in the pus-filled bumps of MRSA-infected wound.
- If a person touches the pus and then touches an opening in the skin with their unwashed hands, the bacteria can enter the opening, multiply, and cause an infection.
- It can also be spread by touching surfaces or sharing personal items, such as clothes or towels, that have touched the infected person's skin.

How Do I Know If My Child Has a MRSA Infection?

A health care provider can diagnose MRSA. If your child has a small wound that becomes larger and is not healing, take them to see a healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will review symptoms and may take a swab of the wound and send it to a laboratory for testing.



If you have additional questions or are concerned your child might have a MRSA infection, contact your healthcare provider. This fact sheet provides general information only.

What If My Child Has a MRSA Infection?

Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has a MRSA infection.

How is it treated?

A healthcare provider may prescribe an antibiotic that treats the MRSA infection.

How can I help prevent MRSA from spreading?

- People with a MRSA infection should keep their wound(s) covered with clean and dry bandages.
- People without a MRSA infection should keep broken skin (open wounds) clean, dry and covered with a bandage. If a person has cracked skin on their hands, they should wear gloves.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, clothing, and blankets.
- Thoroughly clean toys and other objects that children may share with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect household surfaces.

Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

No. Children who have been exposed to, or have been diagnosed with, MRSA can continue to attend child care **unless**:

- The pus-filled bumps are oozing and cannot be kept covered.
- They have a fever (temperature of 100.4°F [38°C] or higher) along with other symptoms.
- They do not feel well enough to participate in classroom activities (for example: unusually tired; cranky or fussy; or crying more than normal).

Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 6th Edition. Pages 177-178
- Caring for our Children, Chapter 3 Health Promotion and Protection, 3.6 Management of Illness, 3.6.1 Inclusion/Exclusion Due to Illness

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

• Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/index.html