

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

CAUSE: MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics called beta-lactams. Beta-lactam antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin. It is estimated that 1 % of the population are carriers of MRSA.

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply “staph,” are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25-30% of the population may have staph present in their nose. Sometimes, staph can cause an infection. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics. However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia).

What is community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)?

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

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: 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. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

INCUBATION PERIOD: Varies

TRANSMISSION: Hands are the most important instrument for transmitting infection. 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. Precautions should be taken for students in athletic activities involving close contact.

PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY:

As long as fluid from lesions continue to drain.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water and/or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not accessible.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS:

1. Encourage students, staff, parents, and visitors to follow proper hand washing techniques. Use of alcohol based hand sanitizers when soap and water is not directly accessible.
2. Proper hygiene and not sharing personal items (e.g., towels, clothing)
3. Sanitize all locker rooms, gymnasiums, weight and training rooms
4. Cleaning all interior walls
5. Require all student athletes to shower
6. Prevent any student with open wound or boils from participating in any contact sports.

Can a student attend school with a MRSA infection?

Students who present with open or draining wounds will be excluded from school.

1. Any student identified with a boil or open wound with fluid should be sent to the school health clinic and the parent should be contacted to pick up their child for evaluation.

Broward County Public Schools
Coordinated Student Health Services
Marcia Bynoe, Director

2. Students must have a note from a healthcare provider stating they may return to school.

Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?

- Yes. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

Please report any confirmed cases of MRSA, or questions about MRSA to Coordinated Student Health Services at 754-321-1575. Additional information is available on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/>