

MRSA

(Methicillin-resistant
Staphylococcus aureus)



Staphylococcus (staf-ih-loh-KOK-us) aureus (OR-e-us) or "staph" are common bacteria that is often found on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Staph can live on the body without causing any problems. This is called "colonization". Up to 30% of the population may be colonized with staph at any given time.

Staph can cause infections of the skin and soft tissue (skin, muscle and fat).

An abscess usually looks like a pimple, boil, or spider bite. You will see redness, swelling, and sometimes pus. The area usually hurts and may feel hard. Staph can also cause more serious infections such as bone and joint infections or pneumonia.

In the last several years, there has been an increase in the number of staph infections in the community. Some of these infections do not get better with the usual antibiotics used to treat skin and soft tissue infections. These infections are caused by MRSA, Methicillin (meth-uh-SILL-un) resistant Staphylococcus aureus. This means the staph infection is resistant to usual medicine (methacillin).

MRSA is now seen in the community also. This form of MRSA is known for causing skin infections, especially skin abscesses. Community-acquired MRSA is spread easily among family members, in daycare centers, among sports team members, and in prisons or jails. Stronger medicine may be needed to help treat this infection.

If your child or another family member has a MRSA infection, it is very important to seek care by a trained healthcare provider.

MRSA infections may require:

- Surgical treatment to remove pus
- Specialized wound care
- Antibiotics specifically for MRSA

Prevention of MRSA

Like most germs, MRSA can be spread from person to person. It can be spread from the hands and from shared objects like towels.

To prevent the spread of MRSA you should follow these suggestions:

- All family members should wash their hands well and often for 15 seconds with a liquid soap. You can also use a waterless gel or foam hand sanitizer if your hands do not have obvious dirt on them.

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- Do not share personal items like towels, bed linens, brushes, clothing, razors, or sports equipment like water bottles, ace wraps, or joint braces, etc.
- Clean sports equipment after every use.
- Wash towels and bedding in hot water.
- Shower daily and/or after playing sports or working out.
- Cover all cuts with a bandage until they are healed unless otherwise directed by your doctor or nurse.
- Do not go in hot tubs or whirlpools until the wound is healed.
- Watch for signs of spread of infection or any new areas of infection.
- Call your doctor if the wound is not getting better.
- Finish all medicine prescribed to treat the infection.

Safety Measures in the Hospital

If you have been told your child has MRSA, it is important to tell your child's doctor or nurse during doctor's appointments. You should also share this information with hospital staff if your child is ever admitted to the hospital. If your child is in the hospital, anyone caring for your child will wear gowns and gloves when they come into the room to see your child. There will be certain restrictions while in the hospital. For example, you will need to make special arrangements for your child to come out of his or her room. The nurse and doctor will help come up with a plan of care that best meets your child's needs.

Coming Off Isolation for MRSA

Talk to your child's nurse or doctor if you would like to try to stop the special safety measures used in the hospital. Nose swabs can be done to see if your child still has the MRSA germ. The hospital requires your child have three negative nose swabs before the isolation can be stopped permanently. These negative nose swabs must be done while your child is not taking antibiotics. Talk with your child's primary doctor about arranging this test.

Recurrent MRSA

Some people get MRSA infections that won't go away or keep coming back. If this is a problem for your family, it may be necessary to try to remove this germ from the skin. Ask your child's doctor about a referral to the **Pediatric Infectious Diseases MRSA Clinic at St. Louis Children's Hospital 314.454.6050**

For General Health Information and Resources:

Call or visit the **Family Resource Center**, a health information library on the 3rd floor of the hospital. Call 314.454.2350, email at frc@bjc.org, or check out the FREE **St. Louis Children's Hospital Kid Care App**.

