

# MRSA: What you should know

Methicillin-resistant

*Staphylococcus aureus*

(MRSA) is a type of “staph”

bacteria that causes skin infections that can't be treated with certain antibiotics. It is sometimes mistaken for a “spider bite.” Symptoms may range from minor to

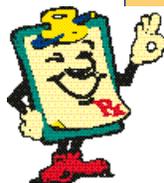
serious, including skin redness and swelling, “pimple-like” red bumps, boils, rash, fever, headache, and

malaise. Infections can spread quickly to other parts of the body or to other people. This brochure contains information about MRSA, including risk, treatment and prevention.



Here's what you can do if a MRSA infection is present:

- ✓ Use antibiotics only as directed by a healthcare provider
- ✓ Keep wounds clean and bandaged until healed
- ✓ Keep hands and skin clean
- ✓ Avoid sharing personal items, like towels, wash cloths, bar soap and razors, even among family members
- ✓ Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, shared items and equipment per manufacturer's instructions (for example: soap and water, diluted bleach, Lysol®, Original Pine-Sol®, or similar disinfectants).



Additional information about MRSA is available on these Web sites:

[www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch)

[www.reduce misuse.org](http://www.reduce misuse.org)

[www.cdc.gov/drugresistance](http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance)



*Protecting our antibiotic lifeline.*

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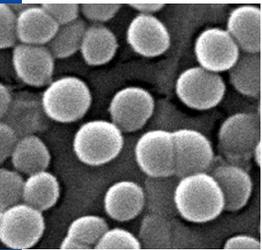
## Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*



# Identify

## What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that causes “staph” infections, ranging from minor skin infections, “pimple-like” red bumps or boils, to serious infections, like pneumonia. But, MRSA infections can’t be treated with antibiotics commonly used to treat non-resistant “staph” infections. Healthcare providers diagnose MRSA by taking a culture of the infected site.



### Types of Infections Caused by MRSA

• “Pimple-like” red bumps	• Abscess
• Folliculitis	• Cellulitis
• Boil	• Impetigo
• Osteomyelitis	• Pneumonia
	• Endocarditis
	• Meningitis
	• Blood stream

## How does MRSA spread?

MRSA usually spreads from person to person through hands or close, skin-to-skin contact. Drainage from an infected wound can spread MRSA to other parts of the body or to other persons. We are all at risk for getting a MRSA infection, because MRSA can live on the skin and survive on some surfaces for prolonged periods of time.

### Risk Factors for MRSA

• Close skin-to-skin contact
• Touching contaminated items and surfaces
• Crowded living conditions, like correctional facilities, dormitories, etc.
• Inadequate personal hygiene
• Openings in the skin, like cuts or abrasions
• Hospitalization, surgery or dialysis
• Indwelling medical devices, like a catheter or IV
• Living in a long-term care or rehabilitation facility

# Control

## How is MRSA treated?

Antibiotics are not always needed to treat MRSA skin infections. Sometimes, a healthcare provider only needs to open and drain the wound. The wound should be cleaned often and kept covered to prevent spreading the infection.



*If wound drainage cannot be fully contained under a bandage, avoid close contact with others (work, school, sports activities) to prevent spreading MRSA.*

## Do antibiotics work on MRSA?

When necessary, antibiotics may be used to treat MRSA infections. A healthcare provider should culture the infection to determine which antibiotic will work best.

Remember that antibiotics are “antibacterial,” they do not work on viral infections, like colds or flu. It is very important to take antibiotics exactly as prescribed. Don’t save them or share them with other people.



*Clean hands are the single most important factor in preventing the spread of dangerous germs. Wash hands with soap and water, and scrub for at least 15 seconds.*

# Prevent

## How can I avoid getting or spreading MRSA?

### Personal hygiene:

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after touching wounds or bandages.
- Do not share personal items, like towels, bar soap, wash cloths, razors, or clothing – even among family members.

### Wound care:

- Seek care immediately at first signs of infection (red, swollen, painful, warm, draining pus).
- Keep wounds clean and covered with a dry bandage, especially if the wound is draining.
- Follow your healthcare provider’s instructions on proper wound care.
- Throw away soiled bandages.
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages.

### Laundry:

- Wash clothes, towels and sheets in water with laundry detergent at hottest suitable temperature. Add bleach, if desired (check label instructions). Dry in a dryer at hottest suitable temperature – do not “line dry.”

### Cleaning:

- Clean and disinfect high-touch or soiled surfaces (for example, door knobs and phones frequently, and shared sports equipment between uses) according to item label cleaning instructions. Types of cleaning/disinfecting products include soap and water, diluted bleach, Lysol®, Original Pine-Sol®. Follow label instructions for appropriate dilutions and contact times to be sure that surfaces are cleaned properly.