



MRSA Fact Sheet

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

What is MRSA? Staphylococcus aureus is a germ (bacteria) often found on a person's skin and mucus membranes. If the staphylococcus bacteria are resistant to the antibiotic methicillin it is called MRSA.

Infection or Colonization? An infection means that germs (bacteria) are in or on the body and make you sick. Most staph skin infections, including MRSA, appear as a bump or infected area on the skin that may be: red, swollen, painful, warm to the touch, full of pus or other drainage and accompanied by a fever.

Germs can also be in the body but not make you sick. This is called colonization. People who are colonized will have no symptoms or signs. MRSA can cause infection or colonization. It is important that you talk to your doctor if you are colonized with MRSA.

How is MRSA spread? MRSA is spread by:

- Touching another person's infection
- Sharing personal items such as towels or razors that have touched infected skin
- Touching surfaces or items contaminated with MRSA

What if I suspect an MRSA infection?

Cover the area with a bandage and contact your doctor. It is especially important to contact your doctor if your signs and symptoms are accompanied by a fever.

How are MRSA infections treated?

Treatment for MRSA skin infections may include having your doctor drain the infection and in some cases, prescribe an antibiotic. Do not try to drain the infection yourself. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses (even if the infection is getting better), unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it.

How do I protect my family from MRSA skin infections?

- Know the signs of skin infections and get treated early
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered
- Good personal hygiene including washing hands regularly
- Do not share personal items such as towels and razors

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/MRSA