

# MRSA in Schools

The following information is from the CDC website as of 10/23/2007.

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/#q1>

**This website is updated frequently. Be sure to check it frequently for the most up-to-date information.**

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) is a type of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics. These antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

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 community associated 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.

Answers to commonly asked questions about preventing the spread of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infections.

## **MSRA Facts:**

### **What type of infections does MRSA cause?**

- In the community most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered by hair (e.g., back of neck, groin, buttock, armpit, beard area of men).
- Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics. More serious infections, such as pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or bone infections, are very rare in healthy people who get MRSA skin infections.

### **How is MRSA transmitted?**

- MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection (e.g., towels, used bandages).

### **In what settings do MRSA skin infections occur?**

- MRSA skin infections can occur anywhere.

- Some settings have factors that make it easier for MRSA to be transmitted.
  - These factors, referred to as the 5 C's, are as follows: **C**rowding, frequent skin-to-skin **C**ontact, **C**ompromised skin (i.e., cuts or abrasions), **C**ontaminated items and surfaces, and lack of **C**leanliness.
  - Locations where the 5 C's are common include schools, dormitories, military barracks, households, correctional facilities, and daycare centers.

### **How do I protect myself from getting MRSA?**

- You can protect yourself by:
  - practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after participating in exercise);
  - covering skin trauma such as abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed;
  - avoiding sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin; and using a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches;
  - maintaining a clean environment by establishing cleaning procedures for frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come into direct contact with people's skin.

### **Should schools close because of an MRSA infection?**

- The decision to close a school for any communicable disease should be made by school officials in consultation with local and/or state public health officials. However, in most cases, it is not necessary to close schools because of an MRSA infection in a student. It is important to note that MRSA transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as hand hygiene and covering infections.

### **Should the school be closed to be cleaned or disinfected when an MRSA infection occurs?**

- **Covering infections will greatly reduce the risks of surfaces becoming contaminated with MRSA.** In general it is not necessary to close schools to "disinfect" them when MRSA infections occur. MRSA skin infections are transmitted primarily by skin-to-skin contact and contact with surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection.
- **When MRSA skin infections occur, cleaning and disinfection should be performed on surfaces that are likely to contact uncovered or poorly covered infections.**

- **Cleaning surfaces with detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectants is effective at removing MRSA from the environment.**

- **It is important to read the instruction labels on all cleaners to make sure they are used safely and appropriately.**

- Environmental cleaners and disinfectants should not be used to treat infections.

- The EPA provides a list of EPA-registered products effective against MRSA:  
<http://epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>

### **Should the entire school community be notified of every MRSA infection?**

- Usually, it should not be necessary to inform the entire school community about a single MRSA infection. When an MRSA infection occurs within the school population, the school nurse and school physician should determine, based on their medical judgment, whether some or all students, parents and staff should be notified. Consultation with the local public health authorities should be used to guide this decision.

- Remember that staphylococcus (staph) bacteria, including MRSA, have been and remain a common cause of skin infections.

### **Should the school be notified that my child has an MRSA infection?**

- Consult with your school about its policy for notification of skin infections.

### **Should students with MRSA skin infections be excluded from attending school?**

- Unless directed by a physician, students with MRSA infections should not be excluded from attending school.

- Exclusion from school should be reserved for those with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage and for those who cannot maintain good personal hygiene.

- Students with active infections should be excluded from activities where skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur (e.g., sports) until their infections are healed.

### **I have an MRSA skin infection. How do I prevent spreading it to others?**

- Cover your wound. Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages until healed. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph, including MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages and tape can be discarded with the regular trash.

- Clean your hands frequently. You, your family, and others in close contact should wash their hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing the bandage or touching the infected wound.
- Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms, that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and laundry detergent. Use a dryer to dry clothes completely.

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## 3M™ DISINFECTANTS

The following 3M disinfectants are EPA-registered effective against MRSA:

### **3M™ Twist 'n Fill™ Products**

- 3M Bathroom Cleaner No. 4 (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. # 6836-309-10350
- 3M Quat Disinfectant Cleaner No. 5 (RTU shelf life 60 days) EPA Reg. #6836-78-10350
- 3M Non-Acid Disinfectant Bathroom Cleaner No. 15 ((RTU shelf life 60 days) EPA Reg. # 1839-166-10350
- 3M Neutral Quat Disinfectant Cleaner No. 23 (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. #47371-129-10350
- 3M HB Quat Disinfectant Cleaner No. 25 (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. #61178-5-10350

### **3M™ Bulk Chemicals**

- 3M TB Quat Disinfectant Cleaner (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. #1839-83-10350
- 3M HB Quat Disinfectant Cleaner (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. #61178-5-10350
- 3M Neutral Quat Disinfectant Cleaner (RTU shelf life 1 year) EPA Reg. #47371-129-10350

### **3M™ CompuBlend™ II Products**

- 3M CompuBlend II Base V with Fragrance EPA Reg. #6836-78-10350

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