

April 10, 2008

Dear Childcare Provider,

Simple scrapes, cuts, and abrasions are common when kids play, whether it is during athletic activities, at recess, or simply during playtime. However, recent news of infection and even fatality related to antibiotic-resistant staph infection, known as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), has shed light on the need for good hygiene and appropriate care for minor injuries to reduce the risk of infection.

A number of factors in childcare settings make children in group-care more vulnerable. Frequent skin-to-skin contact, sharing equipment and toys, personal habits of cleanliness and close physical contact with other children and adults can put children in group-care at risk for MRSA skin infections. As a result, an educational toolkit was designed to help prevent and stop the spread of MRSA skin infections in childcare facilities. This educational toolkit modeled from the Tacoma/ Pierce County Health Department was designed specifically for our county as an internship project by Quanae Hewitt in completion of her Master of Public Health Degree. The Stark County Health Department feels it is important to provide information, dispel fears, answer questions and most importantly, let the staff and parents know that there are simple precautions they can take to prevent an outbreak of MRSA skin infections.

Please review and use the materials of the toolkit as you find a need for them. We hope they will help you in your childcare program. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact the Stark County Health Department at (330) 493-9928.