



MRSA: What Parents Need to Know

What is Staphylococcus aureus or Staph?

Staph is a type of bacteria. It may cause skin infections that look like pimples or boils. Skin infections caused by Staph may be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Some Staph (known as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA) is resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat. The information on this page applies to both Staph and MRSA.

Who gets staph infections?

Anyone can get a Staph infection. People are more likely to get a Staph infection if they have:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

How serious are staph infections?

Most Staph skin infections are minor and may be easily treated. Staph also may cause more serious infections, such as infections of the bloodstream, surgical sites, or pneumonia. Sometimes, a Staph infection that starts as a skin infection may worsen. It is important to contact your doctor if your infection does not get better.

What should I do if I think my child has MRSA?

If you think your child has MRSA, call a doctor. Do not ignore the sore and hope it will go away.

How are staph infections treated?

Treatment for a Staph skin infection may include taking an antibiotic or having a doctor drain the infection. 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. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save them to use later.

How do I keep staph from spreading?

Hand washing is still the best protection against diseases and infections like Staph and MRSA. Teach your children good hand washing habits by washing with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds-or the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice.

Can my child still attend school?

Unless the doctor advises not to attend school, children should be allowed to attend school as long as their infection is not draining and can be covered by a dry dressing.

If you have any questions about your condition, please ask your doctor.

For more information, please contact the Stark County Health Department at 330-493-9928 or visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/MRSAPatientInfoSheet.pdf>.

