



Community-Associated MRSA Information

What is *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph)?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria.

What is MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)?

Some staph bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to some antibiotics called beta-lactams. The infections are usually treatable by different antibiotics that can be prescribed by your health care provider.

Who gets staph or MRSA infections?

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. These healthcare-associated staph infections include surgical wound infections, urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia.

Community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) is a staph infection that can also cause illness in persons outside of hospitals and healthcare facilities.

What are the symptoms of an MRSA infection?

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

Who is at risk for community-associated MRSA?

1. The infection is more common among athletes, military recruits, children, Pacific Islanders, Alaskan Natives, Native Americans, men who have sex with men, and prisoners.
2. Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?

Practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
5. At the gym, cover any open skin area such as abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage; avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors; use a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment; and wipe surfaces of equipment before and after use.

What should I do if I think I have a staph or MRSA infection?

See your healthcare provider.

For more information please contact your health care provider or visit the CDC web site:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html