

MRSA

What is MRSA?

MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a type of bacterium that is resistant to treatment with certain antibiotics. Most of the time, MRSA causes skin infections, but it can also lead to pneumonia and bloodstream infections. In the past, MRSA occurred in hospitals and nursing homes, but it is becoming more common in community settings such as schools and daycare centers.

How is it spread?

People can become infected with MRSA by touching infected people or contaminated objects and surfaces. These bacteria can then enter the body through cuts, scrapes, or other openings in the skin. "Staph" bacteria can be found on the skin of healthy people, but only a very small percentage is MRSA. Anyone can get MRSA. MRSA can spread easily among people who spend time in close contact with each other, such as family members and participants in close-contact sports. MRSA is not spread through the air.

Prevention

Personal hygiene is very important in preventing and controlling the spread of MRSA infections. Washing hands frequently throughout the day, showering after playing contact sports or using gym equipment, and laundering clothing in hot water will help prevent the spread of MRSA skin infections. Do not share clothing, towels or personal care items. Keep all skin wounds covered with a bandage.

High risk behaviors that are associated with MRSA include:

Sharing personal care items such as razors, bar soap, cosmetics or towels

Getting tattoos and body piercing using unsterile equipment

Engaging in sexual activity or having close physical contact with MRSA-infected people

Sharing syringes

Sharing athletic gear (pads or helmets) that is not cleaned regularly

Seek medical care right away if you think you may be infected to prevent dangerous complications from developing.

Additional information

Please visit the following sites and search MRSA for more information.

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[NJ Dept. of Health and Senior Services](#)

[National Association of School Nurses](#)