

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY FAMILY FROM MRSA?

- Know the signs of a MRSA skin infection and get treated early.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered.
- Encourage good hygiene. Regularly wash your hands with soap and water.
- Discourage the sharing of personal items such as towels and razors.
- Maintain a clean environment by cleaning frequently touched surfaces that come into direct contact with your skin.
- Shower with soap and water after activities (e.g. sports) where you have had direct skin contact with other people.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/MRSA>

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

MRSA Skin Infection Fact Sheet

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/staph/documents/mrsa.pdf>



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MRSA

Frequently Asked Questions About MRSA



WHAT DOES A MRSA SKIN INFECTION LOOK LIKE?

A skin infection with MRSA can begin as a reddened area on the skin, or resemble a pimple that quickly develops and is very painful. There is often swelling and pus.

It is also possible for a pre-existing cut, turfburn or other irritated area on the skin to develop an infection with MRSA if the area is not kept clean and dry.



Photos: <http://phil.cdc.gov>

WHAT IF I SUSPECT A MRSA INFECTION?

Cover the area with a clean bandage, wash your hands and contact your healthcare professional. This is especially important if you have a fever and symptoms of MRSA (a red, swollen, painful bump or rash).

HOW IS MRSA TREATED?

MRSA skin infections can be treated by a health care professional by draining and caring for the wound.

Antibiotics may also be given. These infections can be serious and must be treated quickly!

WHAT IS *Staphylococcus aureus*?

Staphylococcus aureus (*S. aureus*) is a bacteria that often causes skin infections, but can also cause other more serious infections, such as pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

WHAT IS MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a strain of *S. aureus* that is resistant to methicillin, an antibiotic in the same class as penicillin. It can exist within hospital settings, but is often found in the community.

HOW IS MRSA SPREAD?

MRSA is spread through direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with items that have touched infected skin (e.g. towels, razors, uniforms and athletic equipment). Poor hygiene practices help facilitate the spread of the bacteria.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Disinfectants are products that destroy germs and prevent them from growing. Disinfectants that are effective against MRSA are available at grocery and retail stores. Check the label on the container to see if it will kill MRSA or *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Equipment that is shared by many people (e.g. keyboards, helmets) should be cleaned after each use and allowed to dry.

LAUNDRY

If you have a MRSA infection, dirty clothes and bedding can spread it. Routine laundry procedures using detergent will help to make clothes, towels and linens safe to wear or touch.

- Read and follow the label instructions on clothing and detergent. Wash and dry clothes in the warmest temperature recommended on the label.
- It is not necessary to use bleach. Use of bleach as a disinfectant is optional, and not all fabrics are suitable for bleach.