Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

What is MRSA?
- MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, which is a bacteria.

Staphylococcus aureus (staph) is commonly found on the skin or in noses of healthy people and does not cause infection. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics—making it more difficult to treat.

- MRSA is a common cause of minor skin infections. It can also cause more serious infections, such as pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and surgical wound infections.

Serious infections may require a hospital stay. This is true for those who cannot easily fight infection (people with weak immune systems).

Where Does MRSA Come From?
- MRSA infections are found in the community (often, where there are crowds of people), as well as in health care settings.
- Over the years the bacteria has become more resistant to antibiotics.

Resistant means the bacteria can no longer be killed by common antibiotics.

What do MRSA Infections Look Like?
- A skin infection may be mistaken for a “spider bite.”
- The infected area is often red, swollen and painful to touch.
- Pus may drain from the infected area.

What is MRSA Colonization?
- Colonization means that MRSA is present on or in the body without causing infection or an illness.
- People who are either colonized or infected can spread MRSA to other people.
- MRSA infection may spread to other areas of the body.
How is MRSA Spread?

- By not washing your hands frequently!
- By touching someone with an MRSA infection and not washing your hands.
- By touching anything contaminated with MRSA and not washing your hands.

What Should You do if You Think You May Have MRSA?

- The only way to be certain is to consult with a doctor.
  
  A doctor will determine the best type of treatment.

What Can You do to Stop the Spread of MRSA?

- Keep your hands clean by washing well and often.
- Keep cuts clean and covered with a proper dressing or bandage until they are healed.
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, toothbrushes, water bottles and sports equipment that directly touch your body.
- Clean objects such as gym and sports equipment before and after use.
- Shower with soap and water right after playing sports or working out in a gym.
- Wash dirty clothes, linens and towels with hot water and laundry detergent.
- Dry clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying them.
- Do not demand antibiotics from your doctor.
- Take ALL antibiotics as prescribed.
- Do not share antibiotics with anyone else.

Adapted with permission of Metropolitan Chicago Health Care.

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
- Your local health department.