

BEST PRACTICES: MRSA

MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)

What is Staphylococcus aureus (staph)?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is commonly carried in the nose and on the skin of healthy people. The bacterium is often referred to as “staph.” Methicillin or penicillin and Cephalosporins are generally used to treat staph infections. About one percent (1%) of persons have a type of staph which is resistant to these antibiotics called methicillin-resistant staph aureus, (MRSA). Other antibiotics must be used to treat MRSA infections.

What does a staph infection look like?

Most infections caused by staph are skin infections, such as pimples or boils. Staph skin infections can be red, painful, swollen or have pus or other drainage. More serious staph infections can also cause pneumonia and infections of the blood and joints.

How is staph spread?

Staph can be easily spread by contaminated hands that have not been properly washed. It can also be transmitted by contact with secretions from infected skin lesions, wounds and nasal discharge, and objects and surfaces contaminated with staph. MRSA is not spread easier, but it is more difficult to treat.

Close skin to skin contact; openings in the skin, such as abrasions or cuts; contaminated items or surfaces are some factors linked to the spread of staph or MRSA skin infections,

If I have staph, or MRSA skin infection, what can I do to prevent others from getting infected?

Cover your wound. Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages.

Follow your health care provider's instructions. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph or MRSA. Keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages or tape can be thrown away with the regular trash.

Wash your hands. You, your family and others in close contact should wash hands often with soap and warm water, especially after changing a bandage or touching an infected wound. You can use an alcohol-based hand gel when soap and water are not available.

Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, wash cloths, razors, clothing that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash soiled sheets, towels, and clothes with water and laundry detergent, drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.

Talk to your doctor. Tell any health care providers who treat you that you have or had a staph or MRSA skin infection.

What to do to prevent staph skin infections.

Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand gel.

Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.

Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.

Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

What to do if you come into contact with a MRSA infected individual at your court facility?

Do not panic if a court user or court employee at your facility has MRSA.

Report it to the court manager and to the Work-Safe Office via e-mail at: work-safe@nycourts.gov or call (646)386-5464.

Arrangements will be made to clean all areas that the MRSA infected employee or court user came into contact with. As well as frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come into direct contact with people's skin, such as desks, doorknobs, etc.

These surfaces should be cleaned using detergent based cleaners or EPA-registered disinfectants.

Seventy-percent alcohol is effective in decontamination and disinfection for MRSA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MRSA PLEASE VISIT THESE WEB SITES:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/index.html>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/10634.php>