

Should students with MRSA skin infections be excluded from attending school?

Students with MRSA infections should **not** be excluded from attending school unless directed by a physician. This should be reserved for those with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage.

Should athletes with MRSA skin infections be excluded from participation?

If sport-specific rules do not exist, in general, athletes can participate if wounds can be covered by a securely attached bandage or dressing that will contain all drainage and will remain intact through the activity. Athletes with active infections or open wounds should not use whirlpools or therapy pools not cleaned between athletes and other common-use water facilities like swimming pools until infections and wounds are healed.



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Should the school be notified that my child has an MRSA infection?

Consult with your school about its policy for notification of skin infections.

Should the entire school community be notified of every MRSA infection?

It is not necessary to inform the entire school community about a single MRSA infection. Medical judgement of the school nurse/physician should be used along with consultation with the local public health authorities to guide infection control policies.

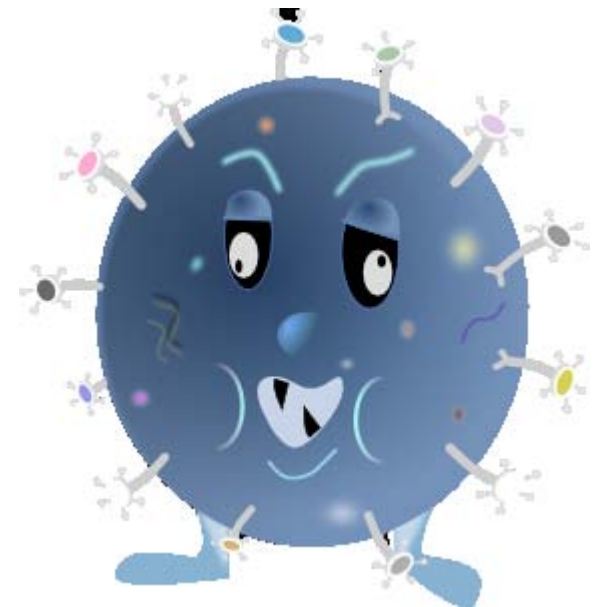
Should schools close because of an MRSA infection?

It is not necessary to close schools because of an MRSA infection in a student as transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as hand washing and covering the infection site.

Please see www.cdc.gov/mrsa or <http://health.state.tn.us/MRSA> for more information.

Last updated July 13, 2010

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Fact Sheet



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What is *Staphylococcus aureus* (Staph)?

Staphylococcus aureus (Staph) are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people (25-30% of the population carry Staph at any point in time). 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 such as pneumonia, bloodstream, or bone infections are rare in healthy people who get MRSA skin infections.



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

MRSA is a type of Staph that is resistant to a group of antibiotics which would otherwise be the antibiotics of choice for treatment of Staph. These antibiotics include methicillin, nafcillin, oxacillin, and ceftazidime.

How is MRSA transmitted?

MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection (e.g., towels, used bandages, razor blades).

Are Staph and MRSA infections treatable?

Yes. Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics. If antibiotics are needed there are still available antibiotic options which will treat MRSA.

How can I prevent Staph or MRSA skin infections?

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or 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. Shower immediately after athletic games or practices with soap and water.
6. Wash athletic clothing and uniforms after each use.
7. Wipe down surfaces that have come in contact with open wounds with standard disinfectants.

If I suspect an MRSA infection, what should I do?

Closely watch minor skin problems — pimples, insect bites, cuts and scrapes. MRSA wounds are often mistaken for spider bites. Do not try to treat the infection yourself by picking or popping the sore. If wounds develop increasing skin redness, swelling, warmth, tenderness, or pus drainage see a medical professional.

What symptoms should I look for that would indicate a more serious MRSA infection?

Though unusual in healthy individuals MRSA can cause more serious infections such as pneumonia, bone infections, or blood infections. Symptoms such as high fevers, shaking chills, diffuse muscle and joint pains, fast breathing and fast heartbeat, dizziness, and altered mental status are indicative of a severe infection. If you experience these symptoms call your doctor or go to the local emergency department immediately.

If I have an MRSA infection, how can I prevent spreading it to others?

1. Keep wounds covered with clean, dry bandages until healed.
2. Seek medical care and follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper care of the wound.
3. Wash your hands often, particularly after changing bandages or coming into contact with the wound.
4. Do not share items that contact your skin such as towels, soap, razors or clothing with others.