

COMMUNITY-ACQUIRED MRSA FACT SHEET

- *Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria.
- Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the U.S. and are a common cause of pneumonia, surgical wound infections, and bloodstream infections.
- MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. This type of bacteria causes "staph" infections that are resistant to treatment with usual antibiotics.
- MRSA can infect people in the community at large, generally as skin infections that look like pimples or boils and can be swollen, painful and have draining pus. These skin infections often occur in otherwise healthy people.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has documented clusters of community-acquired MRSA skin infections among athletes, military recruits and children.
- Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.
- Practice the ABCs of good hygiene to avoid contracting or spreading MRSA:
 - **A**ctive surveillance – Monitor all wounds and keep them covered. If you have a skin infection that requires treatment, ask your doctor if you should be tested.
 - **B**arrier precautions – Keep personal items personal – avoid sharing towels, sheets, razors, clothing and athletic equipment.
 - **C**onscientious hand-washing – The best defense against germs is soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Thoroughly soap and scrub hands for at least 15 seconds, dry with a disposable towel and use another to turn off the faucet.
 - **D**isinfect – Clean shared items. If you have a cut or sore, wash towels and bed linens in hot water with added bleach, then dry in a hot dryer. Wash gym and athletic clothes after each wearing.
- Individuals who think they have a staph or MRSA infection should see a healthcare provider.