

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

MRSA is a form of staphylococcus aureus which has become resistant to certain antibiotics.

CAUSES:	Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus, a bacteria
SYMPTOMS:	Some people may have MRSA on their skin but will not be ill. Other people may have a skin infection which resembles a spider bite or a small pimple. This area can be swollen, reddened, painful and filled with pus
SPREAD:	Many times this infection occurs because the bacteria are on the skin and enter the body through a cut, scrape or wound. It may be spread to others by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person, or through contact with items such as surfaces, equipment or toys which have come in contact with the drainage from an infected wound
INCUBATION:	Incubation period varies. The time from exposure to symptom onset may be from days to years
CONTAGIOUS PERIOD:	As long as wound is open and draining
EXCLUSION:	No exclusion as long as the wound can be securely covered on all sides and the child is well enough to participate
REPORTABLE	<i>Parents/guardians:</i> Inform your child care provider if your child has this illness

For more information, please call the Northern Kentucky Health Department at 859.363.2070.

Revised April 2011

Methicillin/oxacillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Fact Sheet

<p>What is Methicillin/oxacillin resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA?</p>	<p><i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (more commonly known as staph) is a bacterium that can be found on the skin of many people. MRSA is a type of staph bacteria found on the skin of many people.</p> <p>What sets the MRSA bacteria infections apart from other staph bacteria infections is that MRSA bacteria are resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat.</p>
<p>Where is MRSA found?</p>	<p>MRSA infections may start as something that looks as innocent as an insect bite or pimple. In the past, it's been associated with people who were hospitalized or in long-term care facilities, but now is spreading among community groups like sports teams.</p> <p>Certain groups are more likely to get staph infections, including MRSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you had skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a staph infection • If you had contact with items and surfaces that have staph on them, such as gym equipment, or contaminated items, such as football shoulder pads • If you have openings in your skin such as cuts or scrapes • If you reside in crowded living conditions • If you have poor hygiene
<p>What are the symptoms MRSA?</p>	<p>In most cases, MRSA appears as a skin infection, which looks similar to a spider bite. The area is swollen, red, painful and filled with pus. MRSA may also infect surgical and nonsurgical wounds with the same symptoms.</p>
<p>How is MRSA spread?</p>	<p>MRSA infections used to be contained to people who were hospitalized, in nursing homes or who had weakened immune systems. Many times infections started because the MRSA bacteria was already present on skin; the bacteria then entered the body through a surgical incision or wound and infection began. This form of MRSA is called health care-associated methicillin/ oxacillin resistant staphylococcus aureus or HA-MRSA.</p> <p>It is also becoming more common to see MRSA in people who have not been in the hospital or had a medical procedure during the previous year—they acquire the bacteria in the community. This form of MRSA is called community-associated methicillin/ oxacillin resistant staphylococcus aureus or CA-MRSA. This is spread through direct skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a staph infection, or through contact with items and surfaces that have staph on them, such as gym equipment, or contaminated items, such as football shoulder pads.</p> <p>Clusters of community-associated MRSA infections have been reported in members of sports teams, military recruits and in prisoners. The Centers for</p>



	Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 12 percent of MRSA infections are community acquired.
How can I keep from getting MRSA?	MRSA infection can be prevented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proper and frequent hand washing• Keeping cuts and abrasions clean and covered until healed• Avoiding contact with other people's wounds and bandages• Avoiding sharing personal items such as towels or razors• Placing a barrier, such as a towel or clothing, between your skin and shared equipment Wiping the surface of shared equipment before and after use.
If I've been exposed to MRSA, how long will it take for symptoms to develop?	Some people may have staph bacteria, including MRSA, on their skin and never get an infection. For those people who do get an infection, the time from exposure to development of disease can be from days to years. A culture performed by your health care provider is the only way to determine if you have MRSA.
What treatments are available for MRSA? How serious is the disease?	Treatment for a staph skin infection, including MRSA, may include taking an antibiotic or having a doctor drain the infection. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save them to use later. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If you think you have MRSA, you should contact your health care provider. If untreated, MRSA can lead to serious complications. It is possible for MRSA to reoccur in people who have had it previously.
How many cases of MRSA have been reported in Kentucky?	Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States and are a common cause of pneumonia, surgical wound infections, and bloodstream infections. Since many people do not show symptoms of MRSA, it is impossible to know how many people are carriers. At this time, cases of MRSA infections requiring medical care are not required to be reported to the Health Department.
Where can I get more information on MRSA?	For more information online you can visit the CDC's Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/index.html Or call the Northern Kentucky Health Department at 859.363.2070.

Revised April 2011