

Springville Community School District

MRSA Information

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. All of us normally have germs or 'staph' bacteria living on our skin and in our noses, usually these cause no harm. However, sometimes they get inside the body through a break in the skin and can cause an infection. These infections can usually be treated with antibiotics. When the usual antibiotics don't kill the infection, it means the bacteria have become resistant to those antibiotics. Thus we develop MRSA.

Who can get MRSA?

Anyone can get MRSA. You do not need to be an athlete to get this infection. If one person in a family is infected with MRSA, the rest of the family is at risk contracting it as well. Pets can also get and give you an MRSA infection.

What does MRSA look like?

Most often, MRSA causes infections on the skin. These infections may look like any of the following:

- Sores that look and feel like a spider bite
- Large, red, painful bumps under the skin, 'boils'
- A cut that is swollen, hot and filled with pus, 'abscess'
- Blisters filled with fluid, 'impetigo'
- Turf burn
- Infected skin or wound

These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered by hair (back of neck, groin, buttocks, armpit, and beard area of males).

How do you get MRSA?

You can get MRSA the same way you can get a cold, by touching someone or something that has the bacteria on it and then touching your eyes, nose, mouth, or any open areas on the skin.

MRSA can live on surfaces and objects for months. It can be killed with proper cleaning methods.

Some ways that you can get MRSA:

- Touching someone's MRSA infected skin
- Touching surfaces that have MRSA bacteria on them
- Sharing personal hygiene items (soap, towel, wash cloth, razors, athletic equipment, etc.)
- Being in crowded places where germs are easily spread
- Not having the resources to keep clean

How is MRSA treated?

A health care provider should always treat MRSA. It is very important to follow the instructions that you are given. If you have an active infection your provider may choose to treat it in the following ways:

- **Drain the infection.** Do not do this yourself you could cause the infection to go deeper into your skin and make it worse. After this procedure you must keep the area covered until it heals.
- **Give antibiotics.** MRSA's resistance to many antibiotics makes it hard to treat. If you are given an antibiotic take it exactly as prescribed. The last few pills kill the toughest germs.
- **Reduce the number of bacteria on your skin or in your nose.** You may be asked to shower daily with a prescribed cleanser. Your health care provider may also prescribe an antibiotic ointment to put in your nose for several days.

How can I protect myself from getting MRSA?

There is a long list of things that we can all do to help reduce the spread of MRSA infections. We must be very aware of these things and make them lifelong habits if we want to stop the spread of this "super bug".

- Wash hands thoroughly and often with warm, soapy water.
- If soap and water are not available use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub hands for at least 15 seconds.
- Cover all wounds with a clean, dry bandage and all drainage must be contained in the bandage.
- Shower immediately after participating in sports, working out at the gym, or participating in PE classes.
- Clean and disinfect all shared athletic/sports equipment and surfaces after each use with an EPA approved disinfectant.
- Do not share personal items that come into contact with bare skin such as bar soap, razors, towels, make up, or clothing.
- Report any skin infections, no matter how small, to coaches, trainers, and school nurse.

Should the school be notified my child has a MRSA infection?

Yes. It is always a good idea to let the school know if your child has any type of communicable infection or disease. The office will pass this information onto the school nurse. All wounds must be covered and drainage contained inside a dressing for the child to attend school even if the wound is not infected with MRSA.

References & Resources

www.cdc.gov/mrsa
www.idph.state.ia.us
www.jama.com
www.linncounty.org/health

Springville Community School District

MRSA Procedures

Parents

- Notify the school if your child has an MRSA infection.
- All wounds and open sores must be covered with a bandage and all drainage must be contained in the bandage for your child to attend school.

Students

- Wash hands thoroughly and often with warm, soapy water. If soap and water are not available use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover all wounds with a clean, dry bandage and all drainage must be contained in the bandage.
- Shower immediately after participating in sports, working out at the gym, or participating in PE classes.
- Clean and disinfect all shared athletic/sports equipment and surfaces after each use with an EPA approved disinfectant.
- Do not share personal items that come into contact with bare skin such as bar soap, razors, towels, make up, or clothing.
- Report any skin infections, no matter how small, to coaches, trainers, and school nurse.

Teachers

- Enforce good hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizers.
- If you observe a student with an open wound or infection refer them to the school nurse.
- Encourage students to not share personal items with others.

Coaches

- If you observe a student with an open wound or infection refer them to the school nurse.
- Enforce the need for all sores to be covered at all times.
- Encourage your athletes to do a self-body check daily to identify any unusual cuts, bumps, or other spots of possible infections.
- Instruct students to not share personal items with others.
- Assist in disinfecting shared sport items (wrist straps, head gear, belts, etc.).
- Advise students to take clothes home daily to be washed.
- Only allow wrestling shoes on wrestling mats.
- Require all kids to shower each night after practice.
- Constantly have conversation with kids about being vigilant, monitoring their skin, and bringing any abnormalities to the attention of a coach.

Janitorial Staff

- Clean and disinfect surfaces with an EPA approved disinfectant.
- The cleaning supplies are used one time and then laundered prior to the next use. So, for instance, the mop head used to clean wrestling mats before practice is changed out and a new mop head is used to clean the mats after practice.

School Nurses

- Notify the parent/guardian of a student with an open wound or infection about any possible skin infections and referred to a personnel health care provider as needed.
- Educate staff, students and community about MRSA and will update school policies as needed.
- Be in consult with the public health department and the CDC for community wide outbreaks.

References & Resources

www.cdc.gov/mrsa

www.idph.state.ia.us

www.linncounty.org/health