

What do I do if I suspect that a child, employee, family member, or I have skin infection?

The affected should see a doctor or health care provider immediately.

The earlier the infection is treated the better. An infection that is not treated early, is more likely to cause complications and be more difficult to treat.

Can a child or staff member with a MRSA/Staph infection attend or work?

Facilities should establish policies regarding the exclusion of children or staff with boils, draining wounds, and wound dressing regimens. If children and staff with draining wounds are allowed, policy should state that wounds must be covered and no physical contact with other children until the wound is healed. The Center For Disease Control (CDC) recommends that children not be excluded from care, unless directed by the child's health care provider. If a child or staff member has a draining wound that cannot be covered, contained or a bandage maintained intact and dry, they should be excluded until the skin is intact.



Should the center be closed for disinfection when a MRSA infection occurs?

In general it is not necessary to close schools to "disinfect" them when MRSA infections occur. MRSA skin infections are transmitted primarily by skin-to-skin contact and contact with surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection. When MRSA skin infections occur, cleaning and disinfection should be performed on surfaces that are likely to contact uncovered or poorly covered infections.

For more information contact your doctor, local health dept, or your nurse health consultant.

References:

The Center for Disease Control
California Dept. of Public Health
Texas Dept. of State Health Services
Mecklenburg Co. Health Dept, North Carolina
Stanislaus Co. Public Health Services
West Virginia DHHR

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A Provider's Guide to MRSA in the Childcare Setting



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Questions and Answers about Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus

MRSA is a type of “Staph” infection. Staph is a common bacteria that is carried on the skin and in the nose of many health people. If staph does develop into an infection, it is usually minor and easy to treat. MRSA is a strain of staph that does not respond to normal treatment or is “resistant” to certain types of antibiotics. MRSA infections do not look any different than those caused by normal staph. Infections are normally mild, superficial infections of the skin.

What do staph and MRSA skin infections look like?

1. Sores can often feel and appear like spider bites and are often misdiagnosed as such.
2. Red Painful bumps under the skin, called boils or abscesses.
3. A cut in the skin, that is painful, swollen, and hot to the touch.
4. Red, warm, firm skin that is painful and getting larger.



How do Staph/MRSA infections spread?

Infection is spread by contact with the hands or wound drainage from an infected person. Spread may also occur through indirect touching of objects that have been contaminated the infected skin or person with Staph/MRSA. Some examples of possible contaminated objects include: towels, linens, wound dressings, toys, clothes, equipment, and diaper changing areas. Staph/MRSA bacteria can be carried in the nose, but is normally not spread through the air. Staph and MRSA usually present as mild skin infections, but in rare serious cases, it can cause pneumonia, blood or bone infections, or as a deep skin infection.

How are infections treated?

Some staph infections only require draining of the sore, some require antibiotics, and in the case of SOME (not all) MRSA infections, hospitalization is required to administer IV antibiotics, depending on the severity of the infection. If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, it is important to make sure the full course of treatment is completed to completely kill the infection. Early treatment can prevent the infection from getting worse, so if you suspect staph infection, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

What is the best way to prevent the spread of infection?

- **HAND WASHING** with soap and warm water is the BEST protection against infection. An alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used if running water is not available.
- Avoid skin contact with someone you suspect has MRSA/Staph infection
- Avoid sharing personal items with someone you suspect has an infection, for example towels or clothing.

- Use gloves and wash hands if changing bandages or dressings, touching a draining wound, or touching any objects that have come in contact with the wound or its drainage.



- Toys and diaper changing areas should be sanitized and cleaned thoroughly. Clean other objects that are frequently shared.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed, and encourage good hygiene and care for skin. Draining wounds need to be covered.
- Place soiled clothes or items in a plastic bag or waterproof container to be sent home, if laundry is not done at the center. Tell parents to wash items in hot water. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.
- Regularly clean your bathroom, kitchen and all rooms in your center.

