



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Frequently Asked Questions About MRSA

What is *Staphylococcus aureus* or “Staph”?

Staph is a common type of bacteria that is often found on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. It can cause skin infections appearing as pimples or boils.

What is MRSA?

Some types of Staph (known as Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA) are resistant to certain antibiotics, making infections harder to treat. MRSA can be successfully treated with alternate antibiotics, however.

Most MRSA infections occur in hospitals and healthcare facilities. MRSA infection in the community is less common, but increasing. Death from MRSA outside of hospital settings is rare.

Is MRSA easy to get?

MRSA does not spread through the air or water. MRSA is more likely to spread through:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who is infected
- An opening in the skin such as a cut or scrape that is exposed to a surface or items contaminated with MRSA (like shared towels or sports equipment)
- Crowded living conditions and through individuals with poor hygiene

How serious is MRSA infection?

MRSA infection can be treated with antibiotics. MRSA can cause serious or life-threatening infections if it is not treated promptly. If you have a skin infection that spreads or worsens, you should contact your doctor.

What is the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) doing about MRSA?

The agency is working with the Department of Education to provide information to students and their parents on ways to prevent MRSA infections.

MSDH is also working closely with hospitals in Coastal counties to monitor MRSA test results on an ongoing basis.



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How can I prevent MRSA and Staph infection?

- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Keep your cuts and scrapes clean and cover them with bandages
- Do not touch other people's cuts or bandages
- Do not share personal items like towels or razors
- Athletes and coaches should clean athletic equipment and exercise facilities with bleach wipes or other strong disinfectants

If you have any questions about your condition, please ask your doctor.

For more information, please visit: www.HealthyMS.com or

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html.

