

***Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA infection**

What is *Staphylococcus aureus* or Staph?

Staph is a type of bacteria. It may cause skin infections that look like pimples or boils. Skin infections caused by Staph may be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Some Staph (known as Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA) are resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat. The information on this page applies to both Staph and MRSA.

Who Gets Staph Infections?

Anyone can get a Staph infection. People are more likely to get a Staph infection

if they have:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

Common Signs & Symptoms:

- pain or swelling around a cut or an area of skin that has been scraped.
- Boils or other skin abscesses
- Blistering, peeling, or scaling of the skin.
- Enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, armpits, or groin.

How Serious are Staph Infections?

Most Staph skin infections are minor and may be easily treated. Staph also may cause more serious infections, such as infections of the bloodstream, surgical sites, or pneumonia. Sometimes, a Staph infection that starts as a skin infection may worsen. It is important to contact your doctor if your infection does not get better.

Contact the nurse, athletic trainer or a physician if any of the following occur:

- Lymph nodes in the neck, armpits, or groin become swollen or tender.
- An area of skin that has been cut or scraped becomes painful or swollen, feels hot, or produces pus. These symptoms may mean the infection has spread to the bloodstream.
- A boil or carbuncle appears on any part of the face or spine. Staph infections affecting these areas can spread to the brain or spinal cord.
- A boil becomes very sore. Usually a sign that infection has spread, this condition may be accompanied by fever, chills, and red streaks radiating from the site of the original infection.
- Boils that develop repeatedly.

How are Staph Infections Treated?

Treatment for a Staph skin infection 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.

Ways an Infection Can be Prevented

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand cleaner.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a dry bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, or razors.
- Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and detergent.
- Use a dryer to dry clothes completely.