



Community Health Connections

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Fact Sheet

Community-Associated MRSA

What is community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)?

MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics. Staph and MRSA infections usually occur among patients in hospitals or other healthcare settings, but it can also cause illness in persons outside of hospitals and healthcare facilities. MRSA infections that are acquired by persons who **have not** been recently (within the past year) hospitalized nor had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheters) are known as CA-MRSA infections. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people.

How common are staph and MRSA infections?

Data from a prospective study in 2003, suggests that 12% of clinical MRSA infections are community-associated, but this varies by geographic region and population.

What does a staph or MRSA infection look like?

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

Factors associated with spread of MRSA skin infections

Factors associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

What should I do if I think I have a staph or MRSA infection?

See your healthcare provider.

Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?

Yes. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. However, many staph skin infections may be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

If I have a staph or MRSA skin infection, what can I do to prevent others from getting infected?

You can prevent spreading staph or MRSA skin infections to others by following these steps:

1. Cover your wound
2. Clean your hands
3. Do not share personal items
4. Talk to your doctor

What should I do if someone I know has a staph or MRSA infection?

If you know someone that has a staph or MRSA infection, you should follow the prevention steps.

Content source:

Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion (DHQP)
National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases
Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html

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