

# Staph or MRSA

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child may have been exposed to **Staph** or **MRSA** while at child care.

## What are Staph and MRSA?

Staph (*Staphylococcus aureus*) is a type of bacteria. MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* – say “mur-sa”) is a Staph infection that may be more difficult to treat. Some healthy people have these bacteria living on their skin without any symptoms, but sometimes they can make you sick.

## What are the symptoms of Staph and MRSA?

Staph and MRSA can cause skin infections that look like pimples, boils, or spider bites. Infected skin can also be red, swollen, painful, and have pus or other drainage. Fever with these symptoms can indicate a more serious infection.

## How serious are Staph and MRSA?

Most Staph and MRSA skin infections are minor and easily treated. More serious infections of Staph and MRSA can cause wound infections, bloodstream infections, or pneumonia.

## How does a person get Staph or MRSA?

Staph and MRSA are passed most often through skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. It is also possible to get a Staph or MRSA infection from contact with items and surfaces that have been touched by someone who is infected. Staph (including MRSA) can enter the body through cuts or scrapes in the skin.

## When is a person with Staph or MRSA contagious?

A person is most contagious when infected wounds are open or have liquid drainage coming from them.

## How can I help prevent the spread of Staph or MRSA?

- Wash hands well and often with soap and water – at child care and at home.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that have come into contact with wound drainage or pus. (A bleach solution, made fresh daily, of 1 tablespoon bleach per 1 quart water may be used to disinfect a surface that has been first cleaned and rinsed.)
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and dry, and see a health care provider quickly for any possible skin infection.
- Keep all skin infections covered with clean, dry bandages.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with clean, dry bandages.
- Do not touch the cuts or bandages of others with bare hands. (Use disposable gloves.)
- Do not share unwashed personal items such as towels, washcloths, sheets, or clothing.
- Wash any clothing, sheets, and towels that have come into contact with infected wounds with detergent and hot water and dry in a hot dryer.
- If your health care provider recommends medicine for an infection, finish all of the medicine even if the infection looks better before then.
- Contact your health care provider if skin infections return, or if more family members get skin infections.

## What is the treatment for Staph or MRSA?

Most Staph and MRSA infections are treated by good skin and wound care. A health care provider may drain pus from the infection to help it heal. If an antibiotic is prescribed, it is important to finish all of it.

## If my child develops a staph or MRSA infection, must s/he stay away from child care?

Yes, until s/he has been evaluated by a health care provider and

- any infected skin is completely covered at all times with a clean, dry bandage that prevents access to the wound or wound drainage, and
- the child does not have any other symptoms (such as fever) that would require exclusion from child care, and
- any antibiotics that were prescribed have been taken for at least 24 hours.

Please note that teachers may not change bandage(s). If bandage falls off during day, child must be separated from group and parent/guardian must be called to replace bandage or take child home.

