



ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Preventing MRSA Infections

Guidelines for Worksites

MRSA is a type of staphylococcus aureus (staph) bacterium that presents as a skin infection that appears red and swollen and typically resembles a pimple. It is resistant to certain antibiotics including methicillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin. There are other antibiotics available that can effectively treat MRSA.

To prevent MRSA infections at the workplace, consider these guidelines:

- Regular hand washing with non-bar soap is the best way to prevent getting and spreading staph/MRSA. Encourage and practice proper hand hygiene including using a paper towel to open the bathroom door upon exiting.
- Practice and encourage good skin care. Since staph infections start when staph enters the body through a break in the skin, keeping skin healthy and intact is an important preventative measure. Be sure to keep any breaks in the skin covered with a bandage.
- If soap and water are not accessible be sure to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Remember, these sanitizers can be drying so be sure to use a hand moisturizer often to prevent cracked and chapped hands.
- Daily showering with soap and water.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors, topical preparations (lotions, deodorants), and toothbrushes.
- Sinks, showers, and toilets should be cleaned regularly by saturating with disinfectant.
- Launder sheets, towels, clothing, and underclothing with hot water and detergent, and dry on the hottest setting.
- Wear gloves when caring for another person's wounds, and protect clothing from touching wounds or bandages.
- Clean contaminated equipment and surfaces with detergent-based cleaners or disinfectants.

If I have MRSA, can I go to work?

Unless directed by a healthcare provider, workers with MRSA infections should not be routinely excluded from going to work.

- Exclusion from work should be reserved for those with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage and for those who cannot maintain good hygiene practices.
- Workers with active infections should be excluded from activities where skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur until their infections are healed.