

What is MRSA?

MRSA is a type of *Staphylococcus aureus* (or Staph), a bacteria commonly found in our environment and on the surface of our skin.

- MRSA stands for “methicillin-resistant *Staph aureus*”, in other words, methicillin antibiotics are not effective against MRSA
- People infected with MRSA can be treated successfully with other types of antibiotics

People can “carry” Staph bacteria in their bodies, especially their noses, without being sick

- 30% of people are carriers of Staph
- 1% of people are carriers of MRSA

Among healthy people living in the community, MRSA most often causes skin infections. MRSA skin infections are often described as painful:

- Boils or abscesses
- “Spider Bites” or “bug bites”
- Sores that won’t heal
- Red areas of skin that may feel warm to the touch

How is MRSA transmitted?

- by direct skin-to-skin contact
- contact with shared items (e.g. towels, used bandages) or surfaces (e.g. athletic equipment) that have come into contact with someone else’s infection.

MRSA skin infections can occur anywhere, but may be more common in some settings (e.g. households, dorms, sports’ teams, daycare)

These settings often have the 5 C’s that make it easier for MRSA to spread.

- **Crowding**
- Frequent skin-to-skin **Contact**
- **Compromised** skin (e.g. cuts, scratches)
- **Contaminated** items (e.g. soiled bandages)
- Lack of **Cleanliness**

How can I protect myself and my family?

- Practice good hygiene
 - Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Cover cuts and scratches with clean bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items that come into contact with bare skin (e.g. towels, razor)
- When using shared athletic training equipment use a clean towel or clothing as a barrier between your bare skin and the equipment
- Maintain a clean environment
 - Clean surfaces with disinfectant solution (e.g. bleach & water)

The “Superbug” MRSA...

...is super common but not super dangerous to most healthy people living in the community.

What is ECDOH doing about MRSA?

Focusing on infections among people living and working in the community.

- Infections associated with healthcare (e.g. hospitalization) often require different strategies best addressed in the healthcare system

Educating the public and our community:

- Website: www.erie.gov/health
- Responding to questions from the public, schools, clinicians

Developing clinical guidelines to assist clinicians treating patients with skin infections

Collaborating with infectious disease experts in our area to conduct sentinel surveillance for MRSA infections

- Single MRSA cases are not currently reportable to the health department
- Outbreaks among people who share something in common (e.g. football players on the same team) are reportable and will be investigated as needed

I think I have MRSA, what should I do?

- Contact your healthcare provider for an appointment
- Your healthcare provider can order tests to determine if you have MRSA
- If you do have MRSA, you may receive special antibiotics or other treatment
- If you are diagnosed with MRSA, cover your wound with clean dry bandages. Pus from infected wounds can contain MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent its spread.

I heard that there is a case of MRSA in my school/workplace, why didn’t they tell us?

- Usually it should not be necessary to inform the entire school/workplace about a single MRSA infection.
- The school’s/employer’s nurse or physician will use medical judgment and facility policies to decide on next steps once they learn of a MRSA case.
- The facility may contact the health department for guidance, but the facility is not required to report single cases of MRSA.
- Unless directed by their healthcare provider, persons with MRSA do not need to be excluded from school or work.