

Protect Your Kids from MRSA

All kids get bites, cuts and scrapes. Most of the time they heal without any problems. Staph bacteria are a common cause of skin infections. Many of these infections can be treated without antibiotics.

In the past few years, healthy kids are getting a new type of Staph infection. MRSA, methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, is a bacteria that is hard to treat. It does not respond to antibiotics doctors normally use to treat staph infections.

Children with MRSA often need to be in the hospital. They may need IVs (intravenous antibiotic therapy). Some infections may require surgery. Serious infections can even lead to death.

MRSA is spread by *direct physical contact*. It is also spread by *indirect contact*. This means your child touches objects that have been touched by a person who has MRSA. It is not spread through the air by coughing or sneezing. In some areas of the country, kids on a **sports team** reported MRSA infections.

Help prevent MRSA infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests:



For prevention

- Practice good hygiene. Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Shower and wash with soap after every practice and game.
- Wash towels after each use.
- Never share towels, sheets or personal items.
- Clean all sports equipment regularly with an antimicrobial solution.
- Do not touch other people's wounds or bandages.

For treatment

- Keep cuts and scrapes clean. Cover with a bandage until healed.
- If a wound becomes red, swollen or painful, see a doctor. If your child has a wound and develops a fever, see a doctor.
- If your child is on a sports team, report your child's wound or another child's wound to the coach.

Some kids cannot cover wounds during play. The coach should consider not letting the child play until the wound heals.

It is easier to prevent MRSA than treat it. Talk to your kids, other parents and coaches about how to stay healthy and prevent infection.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.