

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)

What Child Care Programs Need to Know

What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) is a type of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics. These antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics, such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems. MRSA infections also occur in persons who have not been recently (within the past year) hospitalized or had a medical procedure. These infections are known as Community Associated MRSA. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people. While MRSA has not been studied in child care centers, it has been found in two child care centers in the past 10 years.

How is MRSA Spread?

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene



What are the symptoms of MRSA?

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



How do I keep MRSA from spreading?

- **Cover wounds on you and the children.** Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph and MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages or tape can be discarded with the regular trash. Children should see a doctor if the wound fails to heal.
- **Clean your hands.** You, families and the children should wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing the bandage or touching the infected wound. All those entering your classroom should be required to wash their hands. Follow NAEYC guidelines for handwashing.
- **Do not share personal items.** Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, or clothing that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.

Information obtained from the Centers for Disease Control. For more information, please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html. October 2007