



# A Parent's Guide to **MRSA** in California

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**For more information about MRSA and staph infections, contact your doctor, local health department or school nurse**

### References:

California Department of Public Health, Division of Communicable Diseases Infectious Disease Branch [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency, Community Epidemiology Branch <http://www2.sdcountry.ca.gov/hhsa>



**Stop the spread of MRSA**

**WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN**



### MRSA

**(Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)**

### What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA (pronounced by listing the initials or saying "mersa") is a disease caused by a type of bacteria. This type of bacteria is called Staphylococcus aureus (S. aureus). S. aureus or "staph," are bacteria that are often carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Some S. aureus are resistant to certain types of antibiotics.

### What does MRSA look like?

- A painful, red area of skin, sometimes with a raised bump or hard area.
- Skin infections such as abscesses, also called boils (pus-filled tissue), which may often look like a spider or bug bite.
- Fevers and chills

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### How does a person get MRSA?

- Direct physical contact with infected people
- Touching objects (such as towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, workout areas, or sports equipment) that have touched the skin of an infected person
- MRSA isn't spread through the air



### How is MRSA treated?

Skin infections can be very painful and even dangerous, if not treated properly.

- If you have a skin infection, go see your doctor to have it examined. Ask your doctor to do a culture of your skin infection.
- Cover all skin infections with clean bandages, especially if they are draining or producing pus.
- If your doctor gives you antibiotics, make sure you take all of them. If the infection doesn't start getting better within 2-3 days, go back to the doctor.



### What should I do if I think my child has MRSA?

Call a doctor. Do not ignore the sore and hope it will go away.



### Can a child with a MRSA infection go to school?

Children should be allowed to attend school as long as the infection is not draining and is covered by a dry dressing.

If the child is involved in a physical activity or sport that involves skin-to-skin contact with other students, return to those activities should be approved by a school official or doctor.

### How do you prevent MRSA?

WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN  
with warm soapy water

- Use 60% alcohol-based hand gel when soap and water are not available
- Bathe regularly
- Shower IMMEDIATELY with soap after physical exercise, practice, and games
- Do not share personal hygiene items (bar soap, towels, razors) or clothing
- Avoid contact with other people's skin infections
- Use a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment
- Cover all wounds with a clean, dry bandage taped on all four sides
- Consider staying home from school if wound drainage cannot be contained by a bandage
- Report skin infections to the Health Office at your school, Doctor, Trainer, or Coach
- Wash soiled clothes, sheets and towels with water and detergent and dry completely in a hot dryer



### When should hands be washed?

- Before and after preparing food or a drink
- Before eating
- After using the toilet or urinal
- After touching animals
- After sneezing, coughing, touching nose or mouth
- Before and after athletic practice, games or working out

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