

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aurereus (MRSA)

What is MRSA?

- A type of “staph” that often causes skin infections when it enters an open area of the skin, like a cut, scrape or other unnatural break (trauma) of the skin
- Resistant to beta-lactam antibiotics such as methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin
- Resistant to other antibiotics too

MRSA has caused anxiety for parents, student, and staff in the school setting because:

- Identifying MRSA infections can be difficult because the symptoms mock other skin infections
- It can only be diagnosed by culture and lab testing and can take at least 48-72hours for confirmation (72 more the norm)
- Misdiagnosis or delayed treatment can not only cause more serious complications for the person affected but increased susceptibility by others

Treatment for MRSA:

- May or may not require antibiotic therapy
- Can be effectively treated with draining the pus (lancing)from the affected area
- Good cleaning of wound and skin care and properly disposing of the soiled bandages
- Keeping the affected area clean, dry, and covered with a dressing
- Washing hands before and after caring for the area
- Allowing the body to heal

How can schools be proactive in the spread of MRSA?

- Promote and practice good hand washing and hygiene
- Ensure that students and staff are covering any open skin are such as abrasions, cuts, etc. with a clean dry bandage
- Routine daily cleaning (and more if needed) with an appropriate disinfectant (1:10 parts **freshly mixed** bleach mix) of bathrooms, kitchens, commons areas, classrooms, student desks, and other shared surface areas as well as any equipment used
- Use of and maintaining liquid soap dispensers (not hand soap) in all bathrooms, kitchens, etc.
- Keep open communication with all healthcare providers, parents, staff, coaches, trainers, and the Monongalia County Health Department
- Initiate all directives received by the Monongalia County Health Department, WV State Department of Education, and the CDC
- Education to students, staff, and parents

Most important is to remember is that MRSA is part of a larger problem of antibiotic resistance infections. Early detection and a completed course of antibiotic therapy is necessary. We need to stop adding to resistant strains of bacteria by:

- 1) becoming cautious at the unnecessary use of antibiotic therapy
- 2) throw out unused antibiotics and do not take or give out others unused antibiotics
- 3) completing all courses of a healthcare provider prescribed antibiotic therapy regimen

The decision to close schools for any communicable disease should be made by school officials in consultation with local and/or state public health officials. However, in most cases it is not necessary to close schools because of a MRSA infection in a student. MRSA transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as good hand-washing techniques, good hygiene practices, and covering all open skin wounds.