

## Think you know how to wash your hands?

A little splash of water is NOT enough to clean your hands. Good handwashing requires soap, water, and friction.

Follow these easy steps to be sure your hands are getting clean each time you wash:

- Use warm water and soap
- Rub hands **vigorously** for 20 seconds
- Wash palms, backs, under nails, between fingers, and wrists
- Rinse off all soap
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Use the paper towel to turn off the water tap
- Use the paper towel to open the bathroom door
- Discard the paper towel immediately after leaving the bathroom

**Wash your hands frequently!!!**

## What should you do if you think you have a MRSA skin infection?

- **Keep the skin sore covered with a bandage or clothing at all times.**
- **Do not share clothing, towels, or personal care items.**
- **Tell your school nurse immediately and seek medical care right away to prevent dangerous complications from developing.**

**If you are diagnosed with a MRSA skin infection and see more than one health care provider, please let each health care provider know about your MRSA infection!!!**

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For more information visit:  
[Http://nj.gov/health/cd/mrsa/index.shtml](http://nj.gov/health/cd/mrsa/index.shtml)

# MRSA



**Preventing Skin Infections in School and Athletic Settings**



## What is MRSA?

**Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*** (MRSA) is a type of bacterium that is resistant to treatment with certain antibiotics. Most of the time, MRSA causes skin infections, but it can also lead to pneumonia and bloodstream infections. In the past, MRSA occurred in hospitals and nursing homes, but it is becoming more common in community settings such as schools and daycare centers.

People can become infected with MRSA by touching infected people, or contaminated objects/surfaces. These bacteria can then enter the body through cuts, scrapes, or other openings in the skin.

### **What should students know about MRSA?**

- “Staph” bacteria can be found on the skin of healthy people, but only a

very small percentage is MRSA.

- Anyone can get MRSA.
- MRSA can spread easily among people who spend time in close contact with each other, such as household members and participants in close-contact sports (for example, football and wrestling).
- MRSA is NOT spread through the air.



### **What are some of the high-risk behaviors associated with MRSA?**

- Sharing personal care items such as razors, bar soap, cosmetics or towels
- Sharing clothing or uniforms that are not properly laundered
- Getting tattoos and body piercings using unsterile equipment
- Engaging in sexual activity or having close physical contact with MRSA-infected people
- Sharing syringes

- Sharing athletic gear (pads or helmets) that is not cleaned regularly.

### **How can students protect themselves?**

Personal hygiene is very important in preventing and controlling the spread of MRSA infections. Washing hands frequently throughout the day, showering after playing contact sports or using gym equipment, and laundering clothing in hot water will help prevent the spread of MRSA skin infections.

It is also a good idea to wipe down gym/sports equipment and exercise mats before and after use. Also, keep skin covered with clothing as an additional barrier. If you have a skin wound, be sure to cover it with a bandage.