

# MRSA

methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

a guide for schools

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. *Staphylococcus aureus* (often called “staph”) is one of many bacteria that normally reside in or on humans and does not usually cause infection. MRSA is a type of staph infection that is resistant to treatment with methicillin and other antibiotics in the penicillin family.

MRSA is typically seen as a skin infection that is red, swollen, warm and tender, and may look like a spider bite or infected hair follicle.

MRSA is usually transmitted from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. It can also be transmitted when a person's broken, infected skin touches a surface, and then the same surface is touched by another person's broken skin.



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## RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

Ohio Department of Health (ODH):

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools>

Cleaning:

<http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>

Ohio Department of Health  
246 North High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Ted Strickland, Governor  
Alvin D. Jackson, M.D., Director of Health



<http://www.odh.ohio.gov>

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Some things you shouldn't share

# The best way to prevent MRSA is good hygiene

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is an infectious or communicable disease that may occur in students or staff in schools. As with other communicable diseases, schools must know how to address the occurrence of MRSA in the school community. Below are answers to some commonly asked questions about MRSA in the school setting.

## HOW SHOULD THE SCHOOL BE CLEANED TO PREVENT MRSA?

Routine cleaning procedures are all that are necessary to combat MRSA. Schools do not need to be closed for special cleaning. A 10 percent bleach solution or Environmental Protection Agency-registered disinfectant that is effective against MRSA should be used.

## SHOULD STUDENTS OR STAFF WITH MRSA BE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that students and staff diagnosed with MRSA be excluded only if the infection cannot be covered and contained.

## SHOULD YOU SEND A LETTER HOME EACH TIME SOMEONE IS DIAGNOSED WITH MRSA?

The CDC does not recommend that schools notify families about a single case of MRSA in the school community. School officials should contact the local health department for guidance if there is a suspicion of an outbreak of MRSA at the school. Immunocompromised students and staff may need to be notified individually.

## CAN ATHLETES WITH MRSA COMPETE?

An athlete may compete if the wound can be completely covered by a bandage that stays in place and contains drainage. The infected athlete should follow the treatment prescribed by the health care provider.

## HOW IS MRSA TREATED?

An infection must be cultured by a health care provider to tell if it is MRSA. Sometimes MRSA can be treated by only incision and drainage of the wound. Some, but not all, infections may need treatment with an appropriate antibiotic.

## HOW CAN MRSA BE PREVENTED?

**The most effective method to prevent MRSA is good hand washing.** Schools must provide adequate time, facilities and supplies for hand washing.

