



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEDICAL PROVIDERS

Central Michigan District Health Department

“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109

2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)

Mt. Pleasant: The recent reports about staph infections by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the rare death of an otherwise healthy individual from a staph infection have raised concerns in Michigan.

MRSA, pronounced “MER-SA”, is caused by the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*. MRSA is a form of a staph infection that cannot be controlled by routine antibiotics.

“*Staphylococcus aureus* is just about everywhere and on everything,” said Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for Central Michigan District Health Department. “Everyone that has ever had a scrape or a cut has probably had a staph infection,” Graham noted. “Many years ago, your mom took care of these infections with soap and water and maybe some merthiolate (a mercury containing substance that was once widely used as a germ-killer).”

Rarely, an otherwise healthy person will get a staph infection that spreads to many parts of the body. Most commonly, staph infections occur in people who are in poor health or live in group settings like nursing homes.

The best way to avoid getting a staph infection, including MRSA, is to wash your hands and keep surfaces and clothing clean. Dr. Graham offers these guidelines for all settings including schools, day care centers and the health care field:

- Allow students time to wash their hands. Handwashing at the beginning of the day, before eating and after recess will decrease the risk of getting or spreading germs of all types.
- Provide students, teachers, and health care providers with waterless hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- Use single-use paper towels or hot air hand dryers after washing your hands.
- People should use their own towel. Towels should not be shared by anyone.



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- Gym clothes and towels should be laundered in the hottest tolerable water with soap and dried in the hottest tolerable dryer setting. Gym equipment should also be cleaned frequently.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and door handles, with hot soapy water.
- Use warm soapy water to clean a minor cut or scrape. More serious cuts and injuries should be examined and treated by a doctor.
- All draining wounds should be kept covered.
- Generally speaking, people with a staph infection should wait 2 to 4 days after starting treatment to return to school or work.
- Use antibiotics wisely. Take all of a prescribed antibiotic as directed by your doctor. Don't take someone else's antibiotics.

This article was provided to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties.

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