

November 29, 2007

RE: MRSA Staph Infection Information

Dear Parents:

Many parents are concerned about recent news accounts concerning methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), a type of "staph" infection that can cause skin infections that may be difficult to treat. Please know that all buildings are following guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health regarding prevention of MRSA, including proper cleaning of school facilities. We also are assisting ODH with education efforts by sharing some of agency's answers to frequently asked questions about MRSA.

What are typical symptoms of MRSA?

Common signs of a skin infection include redness, warmth, swelling, and tenderness. Often a MRSA infection will look like a spider bite, boil, abscess or pimple. If let untreated, it could progress into a more serious illness.

How is MRSA spread?


In outbreak situations, the environment has not played a significant role in the transmission of MRSA. Studies in health care and community settings show skin-to-skin contact, direct contact with infected wound drainage or contact with contaminated surfaces or things such as sports equipment as the likely sources of transmission. MRSA skin infections are not spread through the air.

How can students protect themselves?

Students can protect themselves from infections by:

- Practicing good hygiene (e.g. keeping their hands clean by washing with soap and water or using alcohol based hand rubs, and showering after games and practices;
- Covering any open skin areas such as abrasions or cuts, with clean dry bandages; not sharing personal items such as towels or razors
- Using barriers (e.g. clothing or towels) between skin and shared equipment
- If they have open wounds, NOT using whirlpools, hydrotherapy pools, cold tubs, swimming pools and other common tubs
- Wiping surfaces of equipment before and after use
- Be sure and see your doctor if you have concerns to be tested

We share your concerns about the health and safety of our students. Please learn as much as you can about MRSA, be aware of possible symptoms and seek medical attention promptly if needed. For more specific information about this infection, please visit the Ohio Department of Health's web site at www.odh.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,

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