



Genesee County Health Department

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www.gchd.us

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Release Date: October 19, 2007 End Date: October 26, 2007

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RE: **MRSA**

Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) has been receiving inquiries about methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) as a result of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study on MRSA in the United States and recent student deaths associated with MRSA.

Staphylococcus aureus, referred to as “staph”, is a bacterium commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. It may cause skin infections and can be treated with or without antibiotics depending on the severity of the infection. MRSA is a variation of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat.

Staph and MRSA can cause skin infections such as pimples, boils, and rashes that may be red, swollen, and painful and often contain pus. In some instances, more serious infections can cause pneumonia and blood stream infections. Staph, including MRSA is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. It may also be spread by direct skin contact with surfaces infected with staph.

MRSA is treatable and preventable. Treatments may involve good wound and skin care including draining abscesses and keeping wounds clean and dry. In some

cases the use of antibiotics is required. Patients should take all the doses of antibiotics they are given, unless their physician tells them to stop. Prevention steps include:

- Practicing good hygiene
 1. Keep hands clean by frequent hand-washing with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors
- See a doctor if you have symptoms of a staph infection or an infection that does not heal

Schools, workplaces, and other facilities should take the following steps if someone is reported to have MRSA:

- Confirm the diagnosis through a physician
- Follow routine infection control precautions
- Follow routine procedures for cleaning the surfaces in your facility

Persons diagnosed with a MRSA infection can attend school or work regularly with physician approval and as long as they keep the wound covered.

For further information regarding MRSA, please visit the Genesee County website at www.gchd.us or call GCHD at 810-257-3155.