

Burrell School District MRSA-CA Information

Definition – MRSA-CA stands for methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus community acquired. It is a form of staph infection that does not respond to certain antibiotics.

Background – The staphylococcus aureus bacterium was first identified in 1880. By the 1960s widespread use of penicillin led to a resistant strain of staph, or MRSA, which was contained within the hospital setting. In the 1990s, another different strain of resistant staph appeared in the community setting, or MRSA-CA. Inappropriate use of antibiotics is believed to contribute to the development of MRSA and MRSA-CA. The bacteria live on the skin, mucous membranes and noses of healthy people. Infection occurs when the bacteria enter the body and are not destroyed by the immune system.

Risk Factors – MRSA-CA infections are more frequently found when there is close skin-to-skin contact with an infected individual, a break in the skin, contact with contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, sharing personal items, poor hygiene, contact sports, higher body mass index (BMI), cosmetic shaving.

Symptoms – MRSA-CA can have the appearance of a spider bite, pimple, or boil. It can be red, swollen, painful, and seep purulent drainage, or pus. Pain is generally out of proportion to the skin condition. These lesions can quickly turn into deep, painful abscesses that require extensive treatment; therefore, appropriate care is important. Any questionable skin conditions in the school setting are to be evaluated by the school nurse or athletic trainer.

Diagnosis and Treatment – Any skin lesion that does not heal in an appropriate time frame, becomes progressively worse, or is draining needs to be evaluated by a physician. Diagnosis is made based on a culture of the wound so that appropriate medication can be prescribed. Most infections are not severe. The difference with MRSA-CA is that they are resistant to treatment with some antibiotics. They are not more frequent or severe than other staph infections. Once diagnosed and medication is prescribed, it is important that medication is taken as prescribed to insure proper healing and so as not to contribute to future resistant bacteria. Keep all lesions covered with a clean, dry dressing until healing is complete.

Transmission prevention – Personal hygiene is essential to preventing the spread of MRSA-CA and other infections. Proper hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Personal hygiene including showering after physical activity, no sharing of personal items, proper laundering of towels, uniforms, and clothing, disinfecting equipment and surfaces.