

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Community Associated Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA)

What is CA-MRSA?

Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that is resistant to treatment with antibiotics related to penicillin. Antibiotic resistant forms of this bacterium were first found in infections related to hospitals where antibiotics are widely used. However, there are now strains that are spread from person to person in the community, hence the name community-associated MRSA.

What do CA-MRSA infections look like?

CA-MRSA infections are often first identified as boils, pimples, spider bites or infected cuts or scrapes. The bacteria that cause MRSA also can enter the blood and infect other organs, such as the lungs and joints.

Who gets CA-MRSA?

Anyone can get CA-MRSA. It is more likely to spread in group settings where people have repeated close contact with one another such as sports teams, schools, child care facilities, households and jails.

How do CA-MRSA infections spread?

CA-MRSA is usually spread by direct physical contact with infected people or people who carry the bacteria but show no signs of infection.

Spread may also occur through indirect contact by touching objects (e.g., toys, towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, workout areas or sports equipment) contaminated by the infected skin of a person with a CA-MRSA infection.

How is CA-MRSA diagnosed?

A sample of the fluid from the infected wound is collected to grow the bacteria in the laboratory.

Once the bacteria are growing, they are tested to determine which antibiotics (if any) will be effective for treating the infection.

How common is CA-MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus bacteria are a frequent cause of skin infections in the United States, but the exact number is unknown. Based on an ongoing study of laboratory results in Clark County, more than half of *Staphylococcus aureus* infections are resistant to one or more antibiotics.

What should I do if I think I have a CA-MRSA infection?

See your health care provider.

If a member of my family is diagnosed with a CA-MRSA skin infection, what can I do to help prevent others from getting infected?

- Do not “pop” boils or pimples. Pus from infected wounds frequently contains bacteria that may spread to others.
- Avoid touching the infected area unnecessarily.
- Keep skin infections, particularly those draining pus or fluid, covered with clean, dry bandages.
- The infected person and all contacts should wash hands frequently with soap and warm water and

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use paper towels to dry. Follow hand washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when possible. Detailed hand washing instructions are on the Southern Nevada Health District website at: www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/health-topics/hand-washing.php

- Anyone changing the bandages of the infected person should wash their hands before and after changing the dressing and wear disposable plastic or latex gloves if possible. Immediately place used bandages and gloves in a plastic bag to prevent contaminating household surfaces. Close the bag tightly and place in the trash.
- Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms).
- If the infection is on the hands, the infected person should not prepare food or touch others unless waterproof gloves are worn.
- Linens and clothing of the infected person must be washed separately from other laundry with hot water and laundry detergent. Use chlorine bleach for white linens and clothing. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air drying,

helps kill bacteria. Dry cleaning will also kill the bacteria.

- Wash toys and other objects with detergent and disinfect with a diluted bleach solution made by mixing one tablespoon bleach with 4 cups (32 oz.) water. A new batch of bleach solution must be mixed daily.

When can my child return to child care if diagnosed with CA-MRSA?

A child diagnosed with CA-MRSA is not permitted to attend child care until written documentation from a health care professional is received stating that the child's condition is not infectious, communicable and/or contagious. [Reference: *Southern Nevada Health District Regulations Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Facilities* 4.2.3 (b)]

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html.



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