Washington County Schools

MRSA Information

What is MRSA?

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is a type of "staph" (staphylococcus aureus) skin infection. Staph infections have been around for a long time, causing mild to severe illness. MRSA is a kind of staph infection which may be more difficult to treat because it is resistant to certain types of antibiotics. The only way MRSA can be confirmed is through a culture of the wound.

How do you get MRSA?

- Contact with someone's infected skin or drainage from an infected wound.
- Contact with contaminated surfaces, sports equipment or personal hygiene items.

How is MRSA Treated?

- By a healthcare provider who may:
  - Drain the infection and/or
  - Give an antibiotic and/or
  - Help reduce the amount of bacteria on the skin

What does Washington County Schools do to stop the spread of MRSA in our schools?

- Maintains a clean environment by cleaning any surfaces and equipment that may come into direct contact with the skin. Surfaces are cleaned with detergent-based cleaners or standard disinfectants.
- Soap and warm water are available for students to wash their hands.
- 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available when soap and water are not available.
- Encourage students not to share personal items (towels, sports equipment, etc.) and to report any wounds to the athletic trainer, coach or school nurse.
- Inform students that wounds must be covered at all times.
- Exclude students, with draining wounds and/or active infections, from sports/activities involving skin-to-skin contact. Exclude students from school if deemed necessary by the school nurse.

What do students and parents need to do?

- Wash your hands often with warm, soapy water.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Shower after athletic practices, games, and physical activities.
- Do not share personal hygiene items (e.g., bar soap, towels, razors, etc.) or any

items which come into contact with the skin (e.g., clothing, make-up, etc.)

- Avoid contact with other people's skin infections.
- Cover all wounds with a clean, dry bandage taped on all four sides.
- Remain home from school if wound drainage cannot be contained by a bandage.
- Report skin infections to the coach, athletic trainer or school nurse.
- Do not take antibiotics when you do not need them. If you are prescribed antibiotics, do not miss doses or stop taking them early.

Common Misconceptions:

- Unless directed by a physician, people with MRSA infections should not be excluded from work or school. Students should only be excluded if wound drainage cannot be contained with a clean, dry bandage.
- It is not necessary to close buildings because of an MRSA infection.
- It is not necessary to inform all school colleagues, parents or students about an MRSA infection.

Resources for MRSA information:

http://health.state.tn.us/MRSA/index.htm
www.cdc.gov/mrsa