

MRSA - Just the Facts

State of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

- **What Is MRSA -Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph bacterial)?**

Staphylococcus aureus are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Staph bacteria is one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated with antibiotics.

- **MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)**

Some staff bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to some common antibiotics. MRSA has been present for a long time in hospitals and health care facilities. The health-care strain affects persons who are ill and the strain is resistant to ANY antibiotics. A new community strain of MRSA commonly affects healthy persons and is sensitive to MANY antibiotics. This community strain is now the most common cause of skin infections in many communities in the U.S. including West Virginia.

- **What Does MRSA (Staph) Look Like?**

Staff bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. In many cases MRSA may be initially mistaken for a spider bite. More serious infections may include pneumonia, bloodstream infections, surgical wound infections or other deep infections.

- **Prevention**

There are many things that we can do to prevent the spread of MRSA in our schools and our communities. Stressing the importance of good hygiene is vital in preventing the spread in our schools and locker rooms. MRSA may be resistant to some of our strongest drugs, but it CANNOT RESIST HAND WASHING.

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