



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Public Health – Muskegon County

# MRSA Fact Sheet

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## What is *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph)?

*Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people.

Sometimes, staph can cause an infection. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics. However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia).

## What is methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)?

MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics. While 25% to 30% of the population is colonized with staph, approximately 1% is colonized with MRSA.

## Who gets staph or MRSA infections?

Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

## What is community-associated MRSA?

Staph and MRSA can also cause illness in persons outside of hospitals and healthcare facilities. MRSA infections that are acquired by persons who have not been recently (within the past year) hospitalized or had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheters) are known as community associated MRSA infections.

## What does a staph or MRSA infection look like?

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus/drainage.

## How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?

Practice good hygiene:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

## What should I do if I think I have a staph or MRSA infection?

See your healthcare provider.

## Are infections treatable?

Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If you are given an antibiotic, take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop.

## Is it possible that my staph or MRSA skin infection will come back after it is cured?

Yes. It is possible to have a staph or MRSA skin infection come back after it is cured. To prevent this from happening, follow your healthcare provider's directions while you have the infection, and follow the prevention steps after the infection is gone.

## For more information on MRSA:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/ARESIST/ca\\_mrsa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/ARESIST/ca_mrsa.htm)

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