

What is *Staphylococcus aureus*?

Staphylococcus aureus (Staph) is a germ that is found on the skin (armpit, groin, and genital areas) and in the nose of many people and normally does not cause illness. When these germs enter the body through a break in the skin, they can cause small Staph infections such as, pimples and boils or serious infections such as, bloodstream infections, pneumonia or surgical wound infections. MRSA is a specific type of Staph infection that is resistant to many kinds of antibiotics, making it more difficult to treat.

Who is at risk for MRSA?

Your risk is higher if you:

- Have recurrent skin infections or open skin areas such as scrapes and cuts.
- Or a family member have previously been infected with MRSA.
- Have a weakened immune system due to illness or kidney dialysis
- Are an injection drug user.
- Had recent antibiotic use.
- Live in crowded or unsanitary conditions.
- Play in close contact sports.
- Are a man who has sex with men.
- Or a family member have been a patient in a health care facility within the past year.
- Have poor personal hygiene.

How do I know if I have MRSA?

Symptoms of MRSA infection may include:

- Red, swollen, warm, and painful pimple, boil, or blistered areas;
- Pus or other drainage
- Fever and chills; or
- A wound that looks like a spider bite.

See your healthcare provider if you think you have MRSA. Your healthcare provider may collect a sample from the infected area and send it to a laboratory for testing. Your healthcare provider can then prescribe an antibiotic that is right for you.

Fast Facts

- Staph is found normally in the human body and doesn't always cause infection.
- MRSA is an infection that is antibiotic resistant.
- MRSA is spread through skin-to-skin contact.
- Testing is often needed for diagnosis.
- Frequent handwashing and proper equipment care can prevent the spread of MRSA.
- See your healthcare provider early to prevent a more serious infection.

How can MRSA be treated?

Seeing your healthcare provider early on will prevent the infection from becoming worse. If your healthcare provider prescribes an antibiotic, take it exactly as directed and be sure to finish all doses (see antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance quick facts).

How is MRSA prevented?

- Wash your hands properly and often. (see hand washing quick facts)
- Keep your hands from getting dry and cracked.
- Keep cuts and scrapes covered with a clean, dry bandage.
- Avoid direct contact with another person's wound, drainage or bandages.
- Avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with wound drainage.
- Do not share personal hygiene items, such as washcloths, towels, razors, toothbrushes, soap, nail clippers, clothing or uniforms.
- Clean shared athletic equipment and surfaces before use.
- Shower after working out.

Resources for MRSA

All information presented is intended for public use.

For more information, please refer to:

[cdc.gov/mrsa/](https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/)

[cdc.gov/mrsa/community/environment/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/environment/index.html)

<https://www.apic.org/resources/topic-specific-infection-prevention/methicillin-resistant-staphylococcus-aureus/>

[in.gov/health/erc/infectious-disease-epidemiology/healthcare-associated-infections-and-antimicrobial-resistance-epidemiology](https://www.hhs.gov/health/erc/infectious-disease-epidemiology/healthcare-associated-infections-and-antimicrobial-resistance-epidemiology)

