

MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcal Aureus*)

An infection known by the media as the “Super-Bug” is causing a lot of fear across the country. I recently was at a conference and received the most up-to-date information about this infection from Indiana Department of Health and wanted to share key points with you. If you have more questions feel free to see me or someone in the HC.

- ~ **Stay calm**, its not as bad as the media would have you believe, but you do need to be concerned and be vigilant for lesions as described next:
- ~ **Areas on your skin that are red, swollen, warm, or painful** and look like a pimple, boil or blister. There may be pus or other drainage.
- ~ The wound itself may look like a spider bite and you may have fever and/or chills.
- ~ Boils, rashes or ingrown hairs often occur in the area of the armpits, groin, neck and buttocks where the Staph bacteria may thrive.
- ~ MRSA is spread by close contact with an infected person, either by direct skin contact or indirect contact with shared objects or surfaces (including athletic equipment). Wound drainage or pus is very infectious!
- ~ ISD staff will be working on **improved cleaning** in any areas shared by students, especially athletic areas
- ~ Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph) bacteria are commonly found on the skin (armpit, groin and genital areas) and in the nose of many people and normally do NOT cause illness. These bacteria however can enter the body through a break in the skin and cause an infection often pimples or boils. MRSA infection is one kind of Staph bacteria that is resistant to the antibiotic Methicillin and other penicillin types of antibiotics. They are also more likely to develop more severe infections if not treated quickly and accurately.
- ~ If you notice any **symptoms** like those noted above, please consult with your HC provider as soon as possible and ask them to culture the wound if they don't treat it like a MRSA infection. If an antibiotic is prescribed, take it exactly as directed and be sure to **FINISH** all of the doses (even if infection looks better!)
- ~ How to **prevent** –
 - WASH your hands properly and often!! (can use hand sanitizers also)
 - Keep infected areas cleaned & covered with a clean, dry bandage
 - Avoid direct contact with another person's wound, drainage or bandages
 - Avoid contact with surfaces that are wet and could contain 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.
- ~ Any suspicious rashes or infections should be brought to the attention of either your primary health care provider and/or the HC nursing staff
- ~ ISDOH does recommend that after diagnosis and treatment of MRSA has begun, students may attend school as long as the affected area is completely covered and there is no drainage that can escape the bandage. See your Doctor if you have questions about any of this information.