

## **Information for Parents and Schools on MRSA and Staph**

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

"Staph" are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics.

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

MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to some common antibiotics. MRSA has been present for a long time in hospitals and nursing homes. The health-care strain affects persons who are ill and the strain is resistant to many antibiotics. A new community strain of MRSA commonly affects healthy persons and is not as resistant to antibiotics. This community strain is now the most common cause of skin infections in many communities in the U.S., including some communities in West Virginia.

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

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections such as pimples or boils and can be red, swollen, painful, warm or have pus or other drainage. MRSA skin infection may initially be confused with a spider bite. More serious infections may include pneumonia, bloodstream infections, surgical wound infections or other deep infections.

### **How does one get a staph or MRSA infection?**

Staph and MRSA are most frequently spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. Here are some simple rules to protect yourself and others:

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Cover draining sores and wounds.
- Don't touch anybody else's sores or wounds.
- Shower or bathe regularly and wear clean clothes.
- Don't share towels, washcloths, clothing, hats, razors or other personal items.
- Always talk to your doctor before taking antibiotics. If antibiotics are not necessary do not take them. If they are necessary, take them as directed.

### **Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?**

Yes. Warm soaks and incision and drainage ("lancing") are the basis for treatment of simple skin infections. If an antibiotic is prescribed, be sure to take the medication as directed. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save unfinished antibiotics to use later. Remember that many staph skin infections may be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. Consult your doctor for advice.

### **How can I get more information?**

CDC information on MRSA in schools:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources information:

- [http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/staphylococcus/Information the public MRSA September 2007.pdf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/staphylococcus/Information%20the%20public%20MRSA%20September%202007.pdf)
- [http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/staphylococcus/MRSA for schools parents 07.pdf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/staphylococcus/MRSA%20for%20schools%20parents%2007.pdf)

# HOW TO FIGHT STAPH

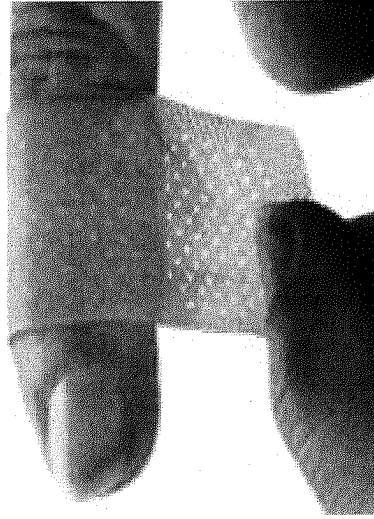
Staph is a skin germ that can make you sick!

WEST VIRGINIA  
Department of

Health  
& Human  
RESOURCES



**1: Keep wounds and sores covered!**



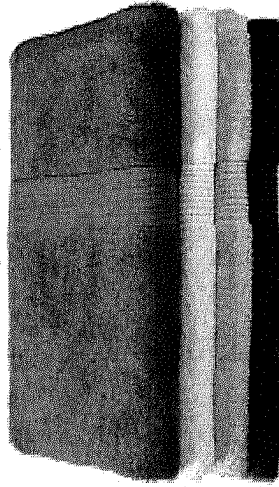
**2: Don't touch someone else's wounds and sores!**



**3: Keep hands clean with soap and water!**



**4: Don't share towels, clothes, and other stuff!**



**5: Stay clean and wear clean clothes!**



**6: Don't take antibiotics unless needed!**



**MRSA is a type of staph. For more information about MRSA or staph, call 1-800-423-1271**