

MRSA

What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is a type of bacteria that are resistant to certain types of antibiotics. When bacteria are resistant, it means that they can't be killed by common antibiotics.

How do people get MRSA?

Many people have bacteria on their skin that don't cause any harm. However, sometimes these bacteria get inside the body through a break in the skin and cause an infection. Infections caused by resistant bacteria, like MRSA, are more difficult to treat. They can also be very serious, especially if they are not treated properly or happen in deeper areas of the body like the lungs.

What does MRSA look like?

Skin infections from MRSA don't all look the same. **Don't try to decide on your own if you have a MRSA infection.** Call your doctor if you have signs of a skin infection such as:

- A **sore** that looks like a spider bite—MRSA is not caused by spiders.
- A large, **red, painful** bump under the skin.
- A cut or sore that is **swollen, hot, and oozing pus or blood.**
- **Blisters** filled with fluid.

Is MRSA contagious?

Yes. You can pick up MRSA bacteria by touching someone's infection or anything that comes in contact with that infection, like a towel. If you have a break in your skin, these bacteria could get in your body and cause an infection.

What is the treatment for MRSA?

MRSA infections should always be treated by a doctor. Treatment may include draining the infection, taking certain antibiotics, or using special soap or ointment. It is very important that you follow your doctor's instructions.

People already being treated for a MRSA infection should see a doctor if they have new symptoms, if the infection doesn't heal or gets worse, or if the infection goes away and then comes back.

Where can I get more information?

<http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/>

Living with MRSA pamphlet is found at

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Topics/Antibiotics/MRSA.htm>