

Community-associated MRSA infections may occur more commonly in certain populations, such as day care centres, prisons, in the military, or in athletes who play on a team.

MRSA SYMPTOMS — Most people infected with community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) have signs of a skin infection. Such skin infections may be mistaken for a spider bite. The skin may have a single raised red lump that is tender, a cluster of "pimples", or a large tender lump that drains pus (called a carbuncle). The area may enlarge and become progressively more tender, red, and swollen. The centre of the raised area may ooze pus.

It is also possible to develop an infection in areas other than the skin if the bacteria enter the bloodstream through an opening in the skin. Infection can then develop on a heart valve, in a bone, joint, or the lungs, or on devices (such as an IV line, pacemaker, or replacement joint). In these situations, symptoms may include fever and fatigue, as well as pain or swelling in the infected area.



PREVENTION IN THE COMMUNITY — The best way to prevent and control MRSA in the community is not clear. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has made the following recommendations:

- Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water. Hands should be rinsed thoroughly, and dried with a single use paper towels.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good alternative for disinfecting hands if a sink is not available. Hand sanitizers should be rubbed over the entire surface of hands, fingers, and wrists until dry, and may be used several times.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean, dry, and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid touching other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms. Other items that should not be shared include brushes, combs, and makeup.
- Students who participate in team sports should shower after every athletic activity using soap and clean towels.
- People who use exercise machines at sports clubs or schools should be sure to wipe down the equipment,



MRSA

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus



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MRSA

What is Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus

Aureus (MRSA)? — Methicillin-Resistant

Staphylococcus Aureus is an infection that is hard to cure. Doctors and nurses sometimes call it MRSA.

People normally carry all sorts of germs inside their body and on their skin. The body usually controls these germs, so they do no harm. About 1 in 3 people have a germ on their skin called “staph.” In these people, staph usually causes no problems. But if they get a cut or a scrape, the germ can cause an infection.

A staph infection can be mild, and affect only the skin. But if the infection goes deeper into the body, it can be very serious. These more serious infections tend to happen in young children, older adults, and people who cannot fight infection well.

One especially dangerous form of staph infection is the antibiotic resistant form. This form is difficult to treat and get rid of. It involves germs that have learned to outsmart the drugs normally used to kill them.

Germ Farm



How do you catch MRSA? — Many people carry MRSA on their skin without knowing it. You can pick up the germ by:

- Touching a person who has MRSA on his or her skin
- Being nearby when a person with MRSA breathes, coughs, or sneezes
- Touching a table, handle or other surface that has the germ on it

If the germ is on your skin and you cut yourself or have another injury, you can get infected.



How do I know if I have a MRSA infection? — If you get a MRSA infection, you will probably have some skin problems. You may have a red tender lump, and it might ooze pus. Or you may have a cluster of bumps that look like pimples or insect bites. If the infection gets into the blood, it can give you a fever or make you feel tired.

If your doctor thinks you have MRSA, he or she can take a swab from your skin and check it for germs. In some cases, blood tests, X-rays, and other tests may be needed.

Can MRSA be treated? — MRSA infections are treated with special antibiotics, germ killing medicines. Antibiotic treatment will only be given if infections occur. Not everyone who has MRSA will require treatment.

If you get treated with medicines to take at home, it is very important that you follow the directions exactly. Take **ALL** the pills you are given, even if you feel better before you finish the pills. If you do not take them all, the germ could come back even stronger.

If you do not get better with the medicines that come in pill form, or if you are very sick, your doctor may put you in the hospital. There he or she can give you stronger medicines through a tube in one of your veins (IV).

Community associated MRSA — You can pick up MRSA outside the hospital, especially if you have one of the following:

- Skin trauma (e.g. grazes, cuts or sores)
- Athletes playing team sports
- Being overweight or obese
- Shaving body hair
- Physical contact with a person who has a draining cut or sore or is a carrier of MRSA
- Sharing personal items or equipment that is not cleaned or laundered between users (towels, protective sport pads)