

University of Virginia
Housing Division
“Pride in Service”

The Housing Division and Office of Residence Life are working together to help maintain a healthier environment for our students and staff members. In efforts to improve communication with Housing when there is an occurrence of a student illness that has the potential of putting other students and staff members at risk of exposure; the following list of student illnesses has been established as a guideline for notification.

Students are asked to notify their RA or the Office of Residence Life in the event that they have been medically diagnosed with an illness listed below. Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated. Confidentiality is respected.

List of Student Illnesses for Employee Notification

Mono (Mononucleosis) - This is a viral syndrome that is spread person to person primarily by sharing saliva - so we're mainly talking about kissing and sharing glasses, silverware, etc. If the staff practices Standard Precautions, this disease should not be a threat to staff.

Meningitis - There are different types of meningitis – bacterial and viral. The most important type of meningitis from an infection control standpoint is a type of bacterial meningitis called "Neisseria Meningitidis". This can cause serious disease and death in a short period of time and usually causes a panic when a case occurs. Being in the same room with a person with this type of meningitis does not constitute exposure; it would have to be a breach of Standard Precautions where the sick person's respiratory secretions got into the mucous membranes (eyes, nose or mouth) of another person to constitute exposure.

Flu (Influenza/ three or more rooms, whole suites or floors) - Exposure could occur by being within 5 feet of a coughing/sneezing patient with influenza or touching contaminated surfaces such as doorknobs. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Chickenpox – Transmitted by a sneeze or cough. For those who have not had chicken pox, being in an enclosed space for a period of time with someone with active chickenpox could constitute exposure. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

TB (Tuberculosis) - Being in an enclosed space or area that is not well-ventilated with someone with active pulmonary or laryngeal TB (as opposed to merely a positive TB test) would constitute exposure. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Shingles – Transmitted by skin contact. The virus that causes chickenpox is also responsible for causing shingles. If someone who hasn't had chickenpox becomes infected, they will develop chickenpox, but not shingles. Shingles is a localized infection due to the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chicken pox. It occurs only in people who have had chickenpox in the past and represents a reaction of the dormant varicella virus. The virus is present at the site of the rash and is contagious for a week after the appearance of lesions (blisters). Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

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Pneumonia - A common lung infection and the signs and symptoms can vary greatly. It is characterized by an inflammation of the lungs caused by a bacteria, virus, or fungus. Pneumonia can be mild, moderate, severe, or even fatal. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff and avoid contact within 5 feet of a coughing person.

Strep Throat - Strep throat is a bacterial infection of the tissues in the back of the throat and the tonsils. The tissues become irritated and inflamed, causing a sudden, severe sore throat. The most common symptoms of strep throat are a sudden, severe sore throat; pain or difficulty swallowing; fever over 101 F; swollen tonsils and lymph nodes; and white or yellow spots on the back of a bright red throat. Strep infection may also cause a headache and abdominal pain. The bacteria are present in the nose and throat, so normal activities such as sneezing, coughing, or shaking hands can spread the infection to other people. The infection can also be acquired by touching objects such as books, tables, or other hard surfaces that were handled by an infected person. A person is considered contagious (able to spread the infection to others) while they still have symptoms; they are usually no longer contagious within 24 to 48 hours after starting antibiotics. However, if they do not seek treatment for strep throat, they may continue to be contagious for 2 to 3 weeks even if their symptoms go away. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus Bacteria) - MRSA is a strain of the common Staphylococcus aureus Bacteria that has mutated and become resistant to commonly used antibiotics. There is increasing number of out breaks of this skin infection among athletics (wrestling, soccer, foot ball, and other contact sports).

► **MRSA facts:**

- * It is easily passed from one person to another (by skin to skin contact). This is especially troublesome in contact sports and school playgrounds.
- * Personal hygiene is key in the prevention of MRSA and Staphylococcus aureus.
- * Any athletic equipment must be thoroughly sanitized after use to avoid transmission of bacteria, as MRSA can live for days on surfaces.
- * Do not ever share or borrow towels, razors, soap, or any other personal items (comb/brush).

► **MRSA symptoms:**

- * Boils, rashes, or ingrown hairs – often occurring in the area of the armpits, groin, neck, and buttocks where Staphylococcus bacteria colonize and thrive.
- * Unexplained fever, muscular pain and/or fatigue, especially in the several months following a skin infection.

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Mumps – is an acute viral illness spread by respiratory droplets; direct contact with nasal, throat secretions or saliva. Wearing a mask is recommended for those in close contact (within 3 feet) of mumps patients. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Pink Eye (Adenovirus) and other forms of conjunctivitis - Standard precautions should prevent exposure (discharge of infected secretions and contaminate surfaces are the sources).

Measles - Measles is one of the most highly communicable infectious diseases. Mode of transmission is airborne, direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons and less commonly by articles freshly soiled with nose and throat secretions. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Norovirus (stomach pain, diarrhea, and vomiting) - Spread by fecal/oral route. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – Spread by being within 5 feet of a coughing/sneezing patient. Standard Precautions are recommended for Housing staff.

Scabies - Scabies is an itchy skin condition caused by an infestation by the itch mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Mites are small eight-legged parasites. Transmission of the mites involves close person-to-person contact of the skin-to-skin variety. It is hard, if not impossible, to catch scabies by shaking hands, hanging your coat next to someone who has it, or even sharing bedclothes that had mites in them the night before. Sexual physical contact, however, can transmit the disease. Animals are not a source of spread of human scabies.