

## MRSA



Dear Students, Family, Faculty, and Staff:

The following MRSA information has been collected from many public sources for your convenience. As you read through this information you will learn that the best preventative measure we can all take to minimize the possibility of being exposed to the MRSA bacteria, as well as other viruses and bacteria, is good personal hygiene. **Proper hand washing is essential and is repeated throughout the sources listed at the end of this document.** If you still have questions regarding MRSA, you are encouraged to contact the UVa-Elson Student Health Center or the Virginia Department of Health for more information.

### **What is MRSA:**

*Staphylococcus aureus* (“staph”) is a common type of bacteria (germ) that is often found on the skin and in the nose of healthy people. It can also grow in wounds or other sites in the body, sometimes causing an infection. For example, staph is one of the most common causes of skin infections. Penicillin is a drug that was once commonly used to treat staph infections. However, over time many staph bacteria have become difficult to treat with penicillin and antibiotics related to penicillin. These new or resistant forms of *Staphylococcus aureus* are called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. The illnesses they cause are the same as those caused by other staph; the difference is in how they are treated. (Virginia Department of Health)

It may appear to be a spider bite on the skin. You should have it looked at as soon as possible by the medical staff at UVa-Elson Student Health Center or your family medical doctor.

### **How is it spread:**

MRSA is spread by contact. It is not spread through the air. So you could get MRSA by touching another person who has it on their skin. Or you could get it by touching objects that have the bacteria on them.

### **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.

### **How is it prevented:**

Personal hygiene is key in the prevention of MRSA and *Staphylococcus Aureus*.

**Proper hand washing may be the single most important thing we can do to prevent the spread of MRSA**, as well as cold and flu viruses and other infectious diseases, and to prevent antibiotic resistance. Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, before, during and after food preparation, after blowing your nose, when they are visibly dirty, and even more often when

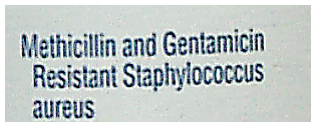
## MRSA

you, or someone in your home, are sick. Using a paper towel to turn off your water faucets is always a good idea as well.

Keep your living areas clean. Clean your faucets and toilet and bathroom door handles daily. Using these measures will not only help you prevent the spread of MRSA, but will keep a barrier between you and many other types of infections.

- 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).

**Cleaning products:** Read the chemical label on cleaning products to make sure it states in writing that it is effective against MRSA.



**Cleaning chemicals are available at the following retailers:**

**K-Mart on Hydraulic Road - Phone: 296-5646**

**Giant at Seminole Square Shopping Center – Phone: 973-7860**

**Kroger at Barracks Shopping Center – Phone: 295-8334**

**Wal-Mart on Seminole Trail – Phone: 973-1412**

**Chemical use safety checklist:**

- ✓ Always read the label and follow manufacturer's instructions before using.
- ✓ Wear gloves while using chemical.
- ✓ Do not mix chemicals.
- ✓ Do not smoke while using chemicals.
- ✓ Make sure you have good ventilation when using chemicals.
- ✓ Close containers and store away from heat sources after each use.
- ✓ Wash your hands after using chemicals.

Sources used in this document:

<http://www.mrsaresources.com>

<http://www.mrsaresources.com/how-to-wash-your-hands/>

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca\\_public.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html)

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/Epidemiology/factsheets/Methicillin.htm>

<http://www.webmd.com>

Picture courtesy of <http://www.mayoclinic.com/>