



## **MRSA** (PUBLIC HANDOUT)

### **What is MRSA?**

MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) refers to a type of bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics.

### **Who gets MRSA?**

MRSA occurs more commonly among persons in hospitals, healthcare facilities, prisons, and close contact sports teams.

### **What are the symptoms of a MRSA infection?**

MRSA skin infections are generally minor, such as pimples, boils, and other skin conditions. They are often mistaken for spider bites. Left untreated, these infections can get worse. These infections could spread to the bloodstream or lungs, causing serious illness and possibly death. If you suspect a MRSA skin infection, you should seek medical attention.

### **How is it spread?**

MRSA is spread through direct contact with a person who is infected with or carrying the organism. Occasionally, MRSA may be spread by contact with infected surfaces or objects.

### **How are MRSA infections diagnosed?**

MRSA infections can be diagnosed by a doctor. A small sample may be taken of the infected area, then sent to a laboratory and tested to see which antibiotics will be effective for treating the infection.

### **What is the treatment for MRSA?**

Even though MRSA skin infections are resistant to certain antibiotics, early diagnosis and treatment can stop the infection from getting worse. Treatment of MRSA skin infections should include drainage of the wound (by your doctor) when appropriate. If antibiotics are needed, your doctor will decide which antibiotic is best for your infection. Follow all your doctor's instructions. In severe cases, surgery may be needed to cure the infection.

### **How can I reduce my risk of becoming infected with MRSA?**

Take the following steps to prevent the spread of MRSA skin infections to others:

CUMBERLAND COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
309 Buck Street  
Millville, New Jersey 08332



SALEM COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
98 Market Street  
Salem, NJ 08079

[www.cshealth.org](http://www.cshealth.org)

- Cover skin infections with clean bandages. Pus and drainage from the infection can easily spread to others. Wear clothing that covers the infected area.
- **Wash your hands!** Wash hands with soap and water frequently throughout the day, especially after touching the wound or changing bandages. Soap does not need to be “antibacterial” soap.
- Do not share personal care items such as towels, razors, or bar soap with others.
- Clean your bathroom and personal care items frequently.
- Wash towels, bedding and clothing in hot water and bleach. Dry these items in hot air dryer to help kill the bacteria.
- Tell your doctor if you have a history of MRSA skin infection.