

# Skin Infections / Staph MRSA

## Frequently Asked Questions



### What are Skin Infections caused by Staph/MRSA?

*Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*) is a type of bacteria that is commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Some *S. aureus* are resistant to a medicine that kills the bacteria – an antibiotic called methicillin —and are referred to as methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* or MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus).

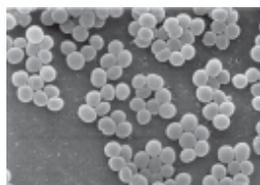


Skin infections can begin with something as simple as pimples, blisters, or other minor skin problems. Superficial infections of the skin can usually be treated successfully with proper skin care and antibiotics, if necessary. MRSA, however, can be difficult to treat and can progress to life-threatening blood or bone

infections because there are fewer effective antibiotics available for treatment.

### How is Staph/MRSA Spread?

Skin infections often begin where there is an opening in the skin such as where a hair grows, a cut or abrasion, or an insect bite. *S. aureus* (Staph), including MRSA, is almost always spread by direct physical contact with infected people or sometimes by contaminated objects, and not through the air. The bacteria can be transmitted during close physical skin-to-skin contact.



Spread may also sometimes occur through indirect contact by touching contaminated objects such as wound dressings, towels, sheets, soap, and clothes. The infected skin of a person with staph bacteria or MRSA can also contaminate other surfaces, like sauna benches, hot tubs, or exercise equipment. MRSA can more easily spread among individuals with weakened immune systems.



### Who Gets Infected?

MRSA can infect **anyone**:

- Healthy adults
- Children
- Infants
- Athletes
- Incarcerated
- Students in dorms
- Immune-compromised
- Injection drug users

### What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms of a Staph/MRSA infection may include redness, warmth, swelling, fever, tenderness of the skin, or boils/blisters. What may appear to be a spider bite may actually be signs of Staph/MRSA infection and prompt medical attention is necessary. Early treatment can help prevent the infection from getting worse. Healthcare provider directions need to be followed closely, even when the person starts to feel better. Incomplete treatments of Staph/MRSA may lead to stronger, antibiotic-resistant bacteria.



### How is Infection Prevented?

Infection can be prevented by paying attention to the Four C's:

- **Cuts:** Keep cuts and scrapes clean with soap and water.
- **Contact:** Avoid skin contact and sharing personal items with infected individuals.
- **Clean:** Thoroughly clean objects and surfaces that are shared with others.
- **Call:** Make an appointment with a doctor if a skin infection is present.



### Additional Information:

Shasta County Public Health (530) 225-5591  
[www.shastahhsa.net](http://www.shastahhsa.net)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)