

# Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

## Clinical Description:

*Staphylococcus aureus* (staph) bacteria commonly reside on the skin or in the nose of healthy individuals and do not cause infection. When these bacteria enter the body through a break in the skin, they can cause mild skin infections, such as pimples, abscesses, rashes, or boils. Staph can also cause serious infections, such as bloodstream and bone infections or pneumonia. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to the antibiotic methicillin and other antibiotics related to penicillin.

## Incubation Period:

The incubation period is variable and indefinite.

## Mode of Transmission:

MRSA is spread by direct physical contact with an infected person, either by direct skin contact or indirect contact with inanimate object (such as towels, clothes, bandages, or sports equipment) that is soiled with wound drainage. The bacteria are not carried through the air, and they are not found in dirt or mud.

## Period of Communicability:

A person is able to spread MRSA if an open wound is not properly covered.

## Exclusion/Reporting:

There are no specific exclusion provisions found in Indiana communicable disease laws or rules for MRSA. Students and staff should not be excluded from attending school unless directed by a health care provider, or if wound drainage cannot be covered and contained with a dry bandage, or if good personal hygiene cannot be demonstrated. For information on laws and rules regarding *Staphylococcus aureus* see Rule 410 IAC 1-2.3 Sec. 98: at [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm\\_dis\\_rule\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule(1).pdf).

## Prevention/Care:

MRSA can be prevented by encouraging students and educators alike to follow these simple precaution methods at all times:

- Encourage frequent hand-washing.
- Keep infected areas covered with a clean, dry bandage.
- Avoid direct contact with another person's wound, drainage, or bandages.
- Avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with wound drainage.
- Do not share personal hygiene items, such as washcloths, towels, razors, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, nail clippers, clothing, or uniforms.
- Clean shared athletic equipment and surfaces before use.
- See a health care provider if a wound shows signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, pain, or drainage.

Prompt referral to a health care provider for evaluation and treatment will prevent the infection from becoming worse.

**Outbreaks:**

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. The local health department should be notified of suspected and/or documented cases of MRSA if the number of cases is in excess of what is normally experienced in your school or occur with a common connection (same class, sports team, etc.). For additional information and recommendations regarding the preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, "Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting."

**Other Resources:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/prevent/schools.html>

Indiana State Department of Health MRSA Resource Manual:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/24808.htm>

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12IJLfD>