



METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA), OR STAPH

Staph is a common germ that many people carry on their skin, under their fingernails or in the nose. Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA, is a type of staph germ that is hard to treat with some of the commonly used penicillin antibiotics.

MRSA usually occurs when the staph germ gets into the body through small scrapes or cuts, sometimes too small to notice. MRSA can occur in otherwise healthy people.

What to look for

MRSA usually begins with a small, painful bump that looks like a pimple or insect bite. When the pimple turns into a painful pus-filled boil, is warm to the touch, red or swollen, this can mean you or your child has a skin infection.

Staph can also cause severe skin infections, surgical wound infections, blood infections and pneumonia. If you or your child has a wound that does not heal or has symptoms of a serious skin infection, see your doctor.

Symptoms of a severe infection include:

- High fever
- Heat and pain around the wound
- Swelling
- Headache and fatigue

The only way to identify MRSA is by a special lab test. Doctors may assume that an infection is a common staph infection and give antibiotics that will not kill MRSA. Most MRSA infections can be treated with other types of antibiotics and good wound care. Be sure to follow the doctor's orders and complete any prescribed antibiotics.

Ways to avoid MRSA

- Keep your hands clean by washing them frequently with soap and warm water or hand sanitizer.
- Keep draining wounds clean and covered.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they have healed.
- Put on a clean bandage every day.
- Report new skin sores or boils to your doctor right away.
- Wash hands and forearms before and after caring for a wound.
- Dry your hands on a clean towel or paper towel.
- Bathe regularly and do not share bath towels or washcloths.
- Do not touch another person's wounds or bandages.
- Do not share personal items like towels, toothbrushes and razors.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Call 1-800-990-8247 for more information on these and more great events.

Tejano Center for Community Concerns March Health Fair

Saturday, March 28
7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Tejano Center for
Community Concerns
2950 Broadway Blvd.
Houston 77017

Easter Eggstravaganza

Saturday, March 28
8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Cleveland Ripley House
720 Fairmont Parkway
Pasadena 77504

Walk Like MADD

Saturday, April 4
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
MacGregor Park
5225 Calhoun St.
Houston 77021

National Poison Prevention Week is March 15-21

What is a poison? Poisons are things that can make you or your child sick, or even kill you, if you eat, drink, breathe, or touch them. Medicines, cleaning products, plants, make up, and paints are all examples of poisonous things that you may have in your home.

Most poisonings are accidents that happen at home, and young children are at highest risk. Babies and toddlers explore by putting things in their mouths, and they might swallow something that could make them sick. This could happen while you are busy making dinner, cleaning the house, or helping your other children.

How can you prevent poisonings? Here are some tips to help keep your kids safe:

- Keep cleaning products on a high shelf or locked cabinet, NOT under the sink.
- Use safety latches on low cabinets if there is anything in them that can harm your children.
- Make sure vitamins and medicines are stored in their original containers and away from your child. If they see you take it, they may try to copy what you do.
- Never call medicine “candy”. Kids like candy and they may not understand the difference!
- In the bathroom, make sure your makeup, toothpaste and perfumes are stored in a cabinet that kids can’t get to.
- Keep the garage “off limits” for play, especially if you store gas, chemicals or paint there.
- Place plants in areas that are out of reach of children.
- Do not rely on “child resistant” packaging lids. Most children can open those containers within 10 minutes!
- Watch your children carefully, especially when visiting others. You may have “childproofed” your home, but everyone else’s home may not be as safe as yours!
- Post the number to the Poison Control Center near your phones and on your refrigerator: 1-800-222-1222.

What should you do if you think someone has been poisoned? Do not give that person anything to eat or drink. Call the Poison Control Center right away and follow their directions.

For more information on poison prevention, visit the Texas Poison Center Network at www.poisoncontrol.org.

Healthy snack ideas for kids and adults

- Fresh fruits, frozen grapes, fruit kabobs (Cut up favorite fruits and let children put on wooden skewers—with adult supervision since the sticks are sharp.)
- Bagels
- Dry cereals or cereal with low-fat (1/2 percent or 1 percent) or skim milk
- Low-fat snack crackers and chips, pretzels, baked chips or low-fat microwave popcorn
- Vanilla wafers, Teddy Grahams, animal crackers, fig cookies, graham crackers, oatmeal cookies (limit to a small serving)
- Flavored rice cakes
- Frozen fruit bars, sorbet, fat-free frozen yogurt or ice milk
- Pudding made with low-fat or skim milk
- Sugar-free gelatin made with fresh or canned unsweetened fruit
- Small cans of juice-packed fruit
- Fruit snacks or fruit roll ups
- Blanched (slightly cooked) plain fresh vegetables or with low-fat or fat-free salad dressing
- Low-fat cheese or turkey sticks
- Frozen banana sticks (Put a popsicle stick into half a banana, roll in yogurt and freeze on wax paper. When frozen, roll in more yogurt and then roll in graham cracker crumbs.)
- Frozen fruit juice popsicles (Partially freeze your favorite fruit juice in a paper cup and then put a popsicle stick in it and freeze.)

For more information on these and other health and safety topics, visit us at www.TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org or call 1-800-990-8247.

Word scramble

Get out your pencils and put your thinking caps on! Here’s a hint – all these words are found in this newsletter.

iionnfect

iopons

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leathy kcanss

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