# Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

**Dear Parent or Guardian,**

**You are being provided with this fact sheet:**

☐ **Because you or your child may have been exposed to MRSA.**

☐ **For informational purposes only.**

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## General Information About MRSA

**What is MRSA?**
- MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is just one type, or strain, of a common bacteria called Staphylococcus ('staph').
- MRSA can grow easily and cause an infection.
- This strain of bacteria is resistant to treatment with some antibiotics.
- It is rare, but sometimes a MRSA infection can lead to more serious infections like pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

**Who can get it?**
- It is most common among people who live in nursing homes or are hospitalized.
- People who are healthy and have not been in the hospital or lived in a nursing home can also get a MRSA infection. This is called community-associated MRSA.

**What are the symptoms?**
- A MRSA infection of the skin can look like a bug or spider bite at first and then develop into pus-filled bumps.
- The bumps and sores are often red, warm, painful, swollen, and have a yellow or white center that contains pus or other drainage.
- Some people may have chills and a fever (American Academy of Pediatrics defines fever as a temperature of 100.4ºF [38ºC] or higher).

**How is it spread?**
- The bacteria are found in the pus-filled bumps of MRSA-infected wound.
- If a person touches the pus and then touches an opening in the skin with their unwashed hands, the bacteria can enter the opening, multiply, and cause an infection.
- It can also be spread by touching surfaces or sharing personal items, such as clothes or towels, that have touched the infected person's skin.

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## How Do I Know If My Child Has a MRSA Infection?

**A health care provider can diagnose MRSA. If your child has a small wound that becomes larger and is not healing, take them to see a healthcare provider.** The healthcare provider will review symptoms and may take a swab of the wound and send it to a laboratory for testing.

**If you have additional questions or are concerned your child might have a MRSA infection, contact your healthcare provider. This fact sheet provides general information only.**

## What If My Child Has a MRSA Infection?

**Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has a MRSA infection.**

### How is it treated?
A healthcare provider may prescribe an antibiotic that treats the MRSA infection.

### How can I help prevent MRSA from spreading?
- People with a MRSA infection should keep their wound(s) covered with clean and dry bandages.
- People without a MRSA infection should keep broken skin (open wounds) clean, dry and covered with a bandage. If a person has cracked skin on their hands, they should wear gloves.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, clothing, and blankets.
- Thoroughly clean toys and other objects that children may share with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect household surfaces.

## Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

**No.** Children who have been exposed to, or have been diagnosed with, MRSA can continue to attend child care **unless:**
- The pus-filled bumps are oozing and cannot be kept covered.
- They have a fever (temperature of 100.4ºF [38ºC] or higher) along with other symptoms.
- They do not feel well enough to participate in classroom activities (for example: unusually tired; cranky or fussy; or crying more than normal).

**Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.**

### References
American Academy of Pediatrics
- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 6th Edition. Pages 177-178
- Caring for our Children, Chapter 3 Health Promotion and Protection, 3.6 Management of Illness, 3.6.1 Inclusion/Exclusion Due to Illness

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/index.html