



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH  
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

JANET OLSZEWSKI  
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 26, 2007

CONTACT: T.J. Bucholz  
(517) 241-2112

## **MDCH Issues Guidance To Communities On MRSA**

*Following Good Public Health Hygiene Practices Critical To Combating Disease*

LANSING – State officials today are advising schools, teachers, and parents that good public health hygiene – including frequently washing hands – is the best defense against contracting disease, including an antibiotic resistant strain of staph making headlines.

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is not a new disease, but recent attention across the country merits more attention to basic healthy habits, said Dr. Greg Holzman, State Chief Medical Executive.

“While the risk of contracting MRSA is extremely small, it is still important for all of us to practice good hygiene, especially as we are beginning the cold and flu season,” Holzman said. “We also encourage everyone not to misuse antibiotics – if you are prescribed an antibiotic, it is critical to follow a doctor’s orders and take all of the medication.”

Staphylococcus aureus, or “staph”, are bacteria found on the skin or in the nose and are one of the most common causes of skin infections. Methicillin-resistant staph aureus (MRSA) is a type of staph that has become resistant to some antibiotics.

The majority of MRSA infections occur in hospitals but it is becoming more common in community settings. These infections may occur at sites of cuts in the skin, abrasions or in areas of the body covered by hair, Holzman said.

Infections can be treated by draining the pus and good wound care. Occasionally an antibiotic will be prescribed. More serious infections such as blood infections or pneumonia are rare with MRSA that is found the community among healthy persons.

MRSA is passed from person-to- person by direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items.

To help prevent staph or MRSA skin infections, practice good hygiene:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol concentration, and keep cuts and open wounds clean and covered
- Avoid touching other peoples’ wounds or used bandages
- Shower immediately after exercising, participating in sports practice or competitive activities, and avoid sharing personal items (that come in contact with skin) such as; bar soap, towels, razors and clothes/uniforms
- Maintain a clean environment by establishing cleaning procedures for frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come into direct contact with people's skin.

MORE

Advice for Teachers:

- Observe students for open wounds, if actively draining pus, report to the office or school nurse if available
- Encourage hand washing
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wash hands, cover wounds, not share personal items, and report new infected areas of the skin

Advice for Parents:

- Clean wounds and cover them with a clean, dry bandage. Wounds that do not heal properly need medical attention.
- Teach children to wash hands regularly such as before eating and after toileting
- Ensure that family members use antibiotics properly, taking all that are prescribed, and not sharing antibiotics. Do not ask for antibiotics for viral illnesses
- Children who participate in sporting events should wash their hands and consider showering after each practice and game
- Children should not share equipment uniforms, towels, or other personal items. Wash uniform and towels with hot water and detergent after each use and dry on the hottest setting the clothing will tolerate

Advice to Schools

- Students or staff members who are infected with MRSA do not need to be routinely excluded from the classroom
- Exclusion from school should be reserved for those with wound drainage that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry dressing that is taped on all four sides
- Typically, it is not necessary to inform the entire school community about a single MRSA infection or close the school. When a MRSA occurs within the school population, the school nurse and or physician should determine, based on their medical judgment, whether some or all parents and staff should be notified.
- Gloves should be worn if you expect to have contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes. Hand should be washed immediately after removing gloves
- Athletes with active skin and soft tissue infections should follow the recommendations of the NCAA or MHSAA for exclusion from competition
- Potentially contaminated surfaces should be cleaned with an EPA registered disinfectant labeled effective against MRSA following manufacturer's recommendation for use. House hold bleach diluted 1:100 (new solution mixed daily) may be used.  
<http://epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>

For more information on MRSA, please check the following websites:

- <http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132--178801--,00.html>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools>
- [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/CAMRSA\\_ExpMtgStrategies.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/CAMRSA_ExpMtgStrategies.pdf)
- Consumers <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/community/antibiotic-resistance.htm>
- Community <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/community/campaign.htm>