



PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

S.S. PALMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Mary A. Brumbach, Principal

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is time of the year when you may begin to see media coverage regarding MRSA. As a district, we thought we would send home an informative letter regarding this skin infection.

What is MRSA? MRSA stands for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus. It is a skin infection that is resistant to certain antibiotic treatments like methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph bacteria are normally present on the skin and in the nose of many healthy people without causing any health problems. But, there are times when staph can enter the body through a cut on the skin and cause an infection.

What are the two types of MRSA? The two types of MRSA are health care-associated MRSA and community-associated MRSA. Health care-associated MRSA occurs among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities. Community-associated MRSA is a MRSA infection that is acquired by a person who has not recently been hospitalized or had a medical procedure.

What does a staph or MRSA infection look like? The skin infection usually appears as a pimple, boil, or abscess that is red, swollen, painful, and may have pus or other drainage. People may think they have been bitten by a spider in the early stages.

How can I prevent a staph or MRSA infection? All forms of staph are spread by skin-to skin contact, inadequate personal hygiene and poor disinfection. The following are precautions everyone should take:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, razors and clothing.

What should I do if I suspect a staph or MRSA infection? Contact your healthcare professional.

If I have a staph or MRSA infection, what can I do to prevent the spread to others?

- Cover your wound with clean, dry bandages until healed
- Clean your hands, especially after changing the bandage or touching the wound.
- Do not share personal items that may have come in contact with the infected wound or bandage. *Personal items should not be shared anyway.
- Tell any healthcare providers who treat you that you have or had a staph or MRSA infection.

Sincerely,

Palmerton School District School Health Services

Resources: CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; www.cdc.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Health; www.health.state.pa.us