



## MRSA TIPS

- MRSA is a dangerous type of staph infection that can be fatal.
- MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Many people pronounce the abbreviation MRSA as “mersa.”
- MRSA isn’t something that floats around in the air.
- MRSA infections are spread through close contact such as sharing personal items like gym clothes, towels, and razors. Athletes can spread MRSA by sharing sports equipment that has not been properly cleaned.
- Methicillin-resistant means that the staph germs are resistant to the class of drugs that usually fight staph infections. Since MRSA is stronger than the drugs we have to fight it, it can be potentially fatal.
- On average, 19,000 people die in the United States each year due to unchecked MRSA infections.
- You may have a MRSA infection if you have any of these symptoms: red, swollen, warm, and painful pimples, boils, or blisters; pus or other drainage; fever and chills; and a wound that looks like a spider bite.
- If you think you may have an infection, go see your school nurse, family doctor, or other medical professional immediately.
- If you have an infection on your skin, never pick, squeeze, or scratch at it!
- If you have a skin infection, keep it clean and carefully bandaged at all times. When you remove a bandage, make sure that you put it in the trash so no one else has to touch it.
- Never touch anyone’s skin infection or their used bandages.
- Any time you have a cut, scrap, sore, or insect bite, clean it with soap and water and keep it covered with clean, dry bandages to prevent infections. Change the bandage frequently until your wound is completely healed.
- When you are working out with shared equipment like exercise machines or weight-lifting benches, don’t let your bare skin touch the machine. Put a clean towel or clothing between your body and the surface, even if it looks clean.
- Gyms and locker rooms are full of germs, and MRSA can spread easily if you are not careful. Wear flip-flops in the gym showers, and dry yourself with a clean towel.
- Don’t borrow or share any personal items such as towels, washcloths, bar soap, razors, combs, clothing, or sports equipment.
- Hit the showers after every workout and at least once a day! Even if you don’t think you smell; you need to fight the spread of germs.



- Liquid soaps, shower gels, and body washes are better than bar soap when it comes to fighting the spread of germs. Bar soap is better than no soap, but plan ahead and try to always have liquid soap available.
- Believe it or not, MRSA can survive on clothing and towels that have been washed in cool water and air dried! Fight the spread of MRSA by washing your gym clothes and towels in hot water (>160° F) for at least 25 minutes with laundry detergent. If possible, use a mechanical dryer set at a hot temperature.
- Wash your hands as often as possible throughout the day. Use liquid soap and water. Rub the soap all over both sides of your hands for 20 seconds. Count to 20 or try singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. Rinse with clean water.
- Dry your hands with disposable paper towels or air blowers. Avoid sharing towels.
- Wash your hands before and after any hands-on contact with other persons.
- Always wash your hands before you eat!
- Carry a hand sanitizing gel containing at least 62% alcohol for use when soap and water are not available.
- Keep small containers of hand sanitizer in your locker, backpack, desk, and gym-bag, so you will always have one handy when you need it.
- Be careful what you touch! Remember, germs can survive on door knobs, light switches, phones, music players, and video games.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces you may touch. Use detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency-registered disinfectants.
- Throw tissues away after one use.