

Dear Parents:

Many parents are concerned about skin infections that can occur with skin-to-skin contact, such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), a type of “staph” infection that can cause skin infections that may be difficult to treat. Please know that all district buildings are following guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and the Stark County Health Department regarding the prevention of MRSA, including proper cleaning of school facilities. Jackson Local Schools are assisting the ODH with education efforts by sharing some of the agency’s answers to frequently asked questions about MRSA. We strive to be proactive rather than reactive to prevent common skin infections that can keep your child out of their sport.

What are typical symptoms of MRSA?

Common signs of a skin infection include redness, warmth, swelling and tenderness. Often a MRSA infection will look like a spider bite, boil, abscess or pimple. If left untreated, it could progress into a more serious illness.

How is MRSA spread?

In outbreak situations, the environment has not played a significant role in the transmission of MRSA. Studies in health care and community settings show skin-to-skin contact, direct contact with infected wound drainage or contact with contaminated surfaces or things such as sports equipment, as the likely source of transmission. MRSA skin infections are not spread through the air.

How can students protect themselves?

Students can protect themselves from infections by:

- Practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping their hands clean by washing with soap or water or using alcohol based hand rubs, and showering after games and practices);
- Covering any open wound/areas such as abrasions or cuts with clean dry bandages; not sharing personal items such as towels or razors;
- Using barriers (e.g., clothing or towels) between skin and shared equipment such as benches;
- Wiping surfaces of equipment before and after each use; and
- Getting tested if they think they may have a skin infection such as MRSA.
- If you are prescribed an antibiotic to treat a skin infection, remember to take all the doses, even if the infection is getting better.

Your role as a parent:

- Make sure you are regularly washing your child’s practice and game clothes in hot, soapy water. This is often a verbal reminder from the parents to **BRING HOME YOUR CLOTHES FROM YOUR LOCKER.**
- Helping to maintain proper hygiene by having your child shower as quickly as possible when practice/games are over. Showers are provided for your child to shower at school. This may help to prevent the spread of germs because they are not passing the germs into the car or their bedrooms when they take showers later on in the evening.
- Keeping an eye on a skin abrasion/cuts or scrape for signs of infection. Signs of infection include but are not limited to: unusual redness or increase in redness to area or surrounding areas, warmth to infected area, an increase in thick, yellow draining from wound and developing of additional “areas” of concern. All cuts/scrapes must be covered by a waterproof band-aid.
- When in doubt, have your child checked out by your physician or school nurse.

If you have any questions about your condition, please ask your doctor. For more information, please contact the Stark County Health Department at 330-493-9928 or visit: <http://www.ede.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/MRSPatientInfoSheet.pdf>.

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