

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE OFFICE OF HEALTH SERVICES

Medical Protocols Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

MRSA is a type of Staph bacteria that is hard to treat with some commonly used antibiotics. It has developed resistance or the inability of certain antibiotics to kill the bacteria. Because of this resistance, MRSA can be hard to treat and can lead to life-threatening blood or bone infections. MRSA can be found in places where there are crowds of people such as gyms, schools and jails. MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact or through touching objects such as towels, sheets, workout areas, and sports equipment.

Medical Protocols:

1. Diagnosis/Symptoms: (what to look for)

- This type of infection is often misdiagnosed as a spider bite.
- Symptoms include redness, warmth, swelling, pus, skin tenderness, pimples, boils or blisters.
- Skin or surface irritations can change to abscesses or serious skin infections.
- Staph infections can cause folliculitis, furuncles, carbuncles, and abscesses.
- Always think MRSA in individuals with; prior antibiotic use, healthcare exposures, crowding, inadequate hygiene, skin conditions or skin breaks.

2. Diagnostic Testing: (how to identify it)

- Always **culture** affected area before treatment!
- If you have one case identified, you probably have more, so check for lesions on all youth.

3. Treatment: (how to treat it)

- Many MRSA infections can be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not required the use of antibiotics.
- **Remember only health care providers should drain sores.**
- If culture is positive treat accordingly with the appropriate antibiotic.
- If the case is severe, you may need very strong antibiotics.
- Always keep draining sores covered to prevent others to become infected.
- In facilities were there are several cases of MRSA identified consider medical isolation; (time of shower, separate laundry items, teach good personal hygiene procedures.)
- **ALWAYS CONSIDER MEDICAL ISOLATION TO AVOID AN OUTBREAK!**

4. Preventive Measures: (how to prevent it)

- **Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water.**
- **Keep any cuts clean and covered with proper dressing and bandage until they are healed.**
- **Avoid contact with other youth's wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.**
- **Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, uniforms, and sports equipment that directly touches the body.**
- **Clean and disinfect objects (such as gym and sports equipment) before and after use.**
- **Wash dirty clothes, linens and towels with hot water and laundry detergent. using a hot air dryer, rather than air drying.**
- **Clean and disinfect living units of the infected youth appropriately. Give special attention to bathroom and shower areas.**
(MRSA lives on skin surfaces and survives on objects and surfaces for more than 24 hours).
- **Establish a good personal hygiene education curriculum in your facility.**
- **Place youth on medical isolation with lesions that cannot be covered well (i.e. hands, face) or are not compliant with medication.**
- **Restrict youth of any contact sports until culture is negative.**
- **If feasible at the facility, separate youths with lesions onto one unit for sleeping and showering, if not able to separate from the general population then identify one area for showering these youths only.**