



Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Community Health Administration,  
Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Programs  
October 19, 2007

## **Interim Guidance for *Staphylococcus aureus* Infections, including Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), in Non-Healthcare Settings**

---

### **BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

*Staphylococcus* (Staph) *aureus* is a bacterium that is commonly found on the skin, and elsewhere on the body, including in the nose. Many of us (30-50%) periodically have staph living on our skin and have no symptoms or illness at all. This is called being “colonized”. Sometimes, though, staph bacteria can enter the body through a break in the skin, a cut, or an abrasion and then cause an infection. By far, the most common kinds of infections caused by staph are skin infections (e.g., boils, abscesses, cellulitis). Rarely, staph can cause more serious infections called “invasive” staph infections. Invasive staph infections are infections that occur in places that are normally sterile, like the bloodstream, central nervous system, or bone. Some people are at greater risk of getting invasive staph infections, including people undergoing kidney dialysis, people with chronic underlying medical problems, people infected with HIV/AIDS, and injection drug users.

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a kind of staph that is resistant to some types of antibiotics. Most staph infections, including MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. However, many staph skin infections, including MRSA skin infections, may be treated without antibiotics by measures such as draining the abscess or boil. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

People with staph infections, including MRSA infections, do not need to avoid public settings like schools and offices if skin lesions can be adequately covered.

### **GENERAL STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEASURES**

#### **1. MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE:**

- Wash hands frequently using soap and water. Alternatively, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used according to label instructions; however, visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water rather than an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Dry hands with disposable paper towels or air blowers. Avoid sharing towels.
- 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 or razors.
- Seek medical guidance for possible infections.

## 2. KEEP THE ENVIRONMENT CLEAN:

- Clean large surfaces (e.g., floors and tabletops) routinely but regularly.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily.
- Clean immediately after spills of blood or body fluids like pus, stool, urine, or vomit. Use appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves, when cleaning blood or body fluid spills.

Use of disinfectants on surfaces:

- Check the product's label to ensure that the disinfectant is suitable for the type of surface being treated (e.g., vinyl, cloth, plastic, or wood).
- Consider using cleaning products with a label that specifies effectiveness against *Staphylococcus aureus*. EPA maintains a list of registered disinfectant products that are effective against MRSA, which is available at the following URL:  
[http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list\\_h\\_mrsa\\_vre.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_h_mrsa_vre.pdf)
- For nonporous surfaces (e.g., tile, stainless steel, epoxy, and linoleum) use an EPA-registered detergent disinfectant suitable for the type of surface being treated. If an EPA-registered product is not available, a 1:100 dilution of household chlorine bleach can be used for nonporous surfaces.
- If bleach is used, cleaning and disinfection should be done at room temperature and surfaces should be rinsed well with water. Do not mix bleach with ammonia.
- Ensure that the disinfectant is prepared to the proper use concentration and that this working solution remains on the surface of the equipment for the recommended contact time.
- Unused working solutions of disinfectant can be poured down the drain. Disposable wipe cloths can be discarded as a routine solid waste.

Additional information about *Staphylococcus aureus* and MRSA can be found at the following Websites:

DHMH: [www.edcp.org](http://www.edcp.org)

CDC: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)