



# CA-MRSA

Community-Acquired Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*



**What is MRSA?** MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a form of bacteria carried on human skin. Once seen only in hospitals and healthcare facilities, staph infections have been present in the general population for more than 15 years. Infections caused by MRSA can be serious and difficult to treat with common antibiotics

**What can I do to avoid getting a staph infection?**

- Maintain good hygiene.
- 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 or razors.

**What does MRSA infection look like?** Staph bacteria, including MRSA, cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

**Are people with HIV/AIDS at greater risk?** People with weakened immune systems may be at risk for more severe illness. They should follow the same prevention measures and contact their healthcare provider if they think they have been infected.

**Is MRSA sexually transmitted?** MRSA infection has not been shown to be directly linked with anal, vaginal, or oral sex. Good hygiene works for sex as well.

**Can I get MRSA at the gym? On MUNI?** MRSA is transmitted most frequently by direct skin-to-skin contact. Although environment, including health clubs, public transportation and other public venues, has not played a significant role in transmission, it may be a good idea to use a barrier (e.g. clothing or towel between your skin and shared equipment, and to wipe surfaces of equipment before use.

**What should I do if I think I have staph or MRSA infection?** See your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Staph infections are treatable.

**How do I learn more?** Additional information is available at these websites:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca\\_public.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html)

**San Francisco Department of Public Health**  
<http://www.sfgdcp.org/index.cfm?id+100>

**San Francisco AIDS Foundation**  
[www.sfaf.org](http://www.sfaf.org) (podcast available 1/24/08)

