



RED ALERT BULLETIN

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Health Services

October 19, 2007

What You Need to Know About
Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Infection

Signs and Symptoms

Staph bacteria can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, and painful or with drainage (pus). MRSA lesions (sores) are commonly misidentified as suspected spider bites.

Cause

Staphylococcus aureus bacteria ("Staph").

Transmission

By physical touching and direct skin-to-skin contact. Staph can also be spread when an infected person uses and shares an item without first cleaning or sanitizing the item, such as towels, soap, razors, or athletic equipment.

Incubation Period

Variable and indefinite, usually four to ten days.

Period of Communicability

As long as the lesion continues to drain. MRSA lives on skin and survives on objects and surfaces for more than 24 hours.

Treatment

Students with lesions should be evaluated by their physician. Most MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics.

Childcare/School Attendance

A child with MRSA should not be excluded from school, assuming any draining lesion is covered with a clean, dry dressing and the child exhibits good hygiene. Children with draining lesions should be excluded from contact sports until the lesion dries or is covered with a dressing or bandage until healed.

Preventive Measures to Avoid MRSA

Environmental cleanliness is imperative. Encourage good hygiene and hand washing; discourage athletes from sharing towels, equipment and personal items. Disinfect and clean equipment that is shared after each use. Keep draining lesions covered with a clean, dry dressing. Adhere to physician's treatment recommendations.

Additional MRSA Information:

<http://health.state.ga.us/mrsa/>

<http://atlanta.k12.ga.us> Link to Board Policy: *Communicable Diseases JGCC*