

## WHAT ABOUT CLEANING MY HOUSE?

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- Pay attention to items that are frequently touched – light switches, doorknobs, phones, toilets, sinks, tubs, showers, and kitchen counters
- Wipe the surface or object with the disinfectant and let it dry

### Disinfectants to use:

- You can use any cleaner you buy at the grocery store that has the word “disinfectant” on it, remember to read the label and follow directions
- Make your own solution of bleach and water
  - Mix 2 teaspoons bleach to 1 quart of water in a container; label it “bleach solution”
  - Make it fresh each time you plan to clean. Bleach evaporates out of water with time
  - **Never mix bleach with other cleaners, especially ammonia**
  - Keep the bleach solution away from children and properly label ALL containers

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

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MRSA can cause serious infections that can become life-threatening if left untreated. If you or someone in your family has been diagnosed with MRSA, there are steps to take to avoid spreading it to others. Follow the recommendations and practice good hygiene to take care of yourself. MRSA may cause physical pain and emotional stress, but keep in mind that it can be managed.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT HAVING MRSA:

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- 1 . Clean your hands often.
- 2 . Take care of yourself: eat right, exercise, and avoid stress.
- 3 . Take good care of your skin.
- 4 . Keep skin infections covered to avoid spreading MRSA to others.
- 5 . Talk to your doctor if you have questions or concerns

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON MRSA?

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### Web Sites:

Minnesota Department of Health  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/mrsa/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/mrsa/)  
Minnesota Antibiotic Resistance Collaborative  
[www.minnesotaarc.org](http://www.minnesotaarc.org)

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

### CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IF:

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- You have any new symptoms during or after treatment for MRSA
- The infection gets worse
- The infection is not healing
- The infection comes back



This brochure was adapted from the Living with MRSA booklet produced by the Washington State Department of Health, the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department and the GroupHealth Cooperative.

## MRSA

Methicillin-Resistant  
*Staphylococcus aureus*



## A Guide for Athletes & Parents

Brought to you by:

Douglas County Sports Medicine



111 - 17th Avenue East, Alexandria MN  
320-325-6078 • [www.dcsportsmed.com](http://www.dcsportsmed.com)

## WHAT IS MRSA AND WHY IS IT SO SERIOUS?

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Staphylococci or “staph” bacteria commonly live on the skin and in the nose. Usually, staph bacteria are harmless. However, if they get inside the body they can cause an infection. When common antibiotics don’t kill the staph bacteria, it means the bacteria have become resistant to those antibiotics. This type of staph is called MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*).

## WHAT DOES MRSA LOOK LIKE?

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Most often, MRSA causes infections on the skin. These infections may look like any one of the following:

- Large, red, painful bumps under the skin (called boils or abscesses)
- A cut that is swollen, hot and filled with pus
- Blisters filled with pus (called impetigo)
- Sores that look and feel like spider bites (MRSA is not caused by insect bites.)

It’s also possible to have MRSA in other areas of the body; these types of infections are less common, although can be more serious.

## HOW DID I GET MRSA?

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Anyone can get MRSA. Some ways you get can MRSA include: touching the infected skin of someone with MRSA, sharing personal items (towels, clothes, athletic equipment) with someone who has

MRSA, or touching objects (public phones, doorknobs) with MRSA bacteria on it. Once you touch something with MRSA you then touch your nose, mouth, or an open sore to contract it.

## HOW IS MRSA TREATED?

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MRSA should always be treated by a doctor. It is important to follow the instructions for treatment that your doctor gives you. If you have an active MRSA infection, your doctor may choose to give antibiotics and/or draining the infection (**DO NOT DO THIS YOURSELF!**)

**Antibiotics:** A culture of your infection may be taken to find out which antibiotic is best for you. ***If your doctor gives you antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.*** DO NOT for ANY reason STOP EARLY. The last few pills kill the toughest germs. Never take antibiotics without a prescription directly from your doctor.

**Drain the infection: DO NOT do this yourself!** If yours is drained by your doctor, you must keep it covered with a clean, dry bandage, until it heals.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT SPREADING MY INFECTION TO OTHERS?

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- Practice proper hygiene by using soap and warm to hot water when washing, showering and bathing.
- Wash your sheets and towels at least once a week
- Change your clothes daily and wash them before wearing again

- Do not share towels, wash cloths, razors, or other personal items
- Keep open sores clean and covered with a bandage. If possible clothes should cover sores as well.
- Do not touch sores; if you do touch a sore, clean your hands right away
- Clean frequently used areas of your home (bathrooms, countertops, and doorknobs etc.) daily with a household cleaner
- Do not participate in contact sports or go to a public gym, sauna, hot tub or pool until your sores have healed

## DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WHEN I DO LAUNDRY?

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Yes. Dirty clothes and bedding can spread MRSA bacteria.

- When touching laundry or changing sheets, hold the dirty laundry away from your body to prevent bacteria from getting on your clothes
- Wear disposable gloves to touch laundry that is soiled with drainage from a sore
- Immediately put the laundry into the washer or a plastic bag until it can be washed
- Use warm or hot water; bleach if possible
- Dry in a warm or hot dryer; make sure to completely dry clothes
- Clean hands after touching any laundry, even if you’ve been wearing gloves
- Throw gloves away after taking them off (don’t reuse them) and wash your hands with warm to hot water and soap.