Community Acquired Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (CA MRSA)

What is Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph)? Staphylococcus Aureus, often referred to simply as "staph," is a bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Sometimes, staph can cause an infection.

What is community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)? Staph and MRSA can cause illness in persons outside of hospitals and healthcare facilities. Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples, boils, and abscesses and occur in otherwise healthy people.

How common are staph and MRSA infections? Staph bacteria is one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States and are a common cause of skin infections, pneumonia, and bloodstream infections.

What does a staph or MRSA infection look like? Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can 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 certain people at increased risk for community-associated staph or MRSA infections? Factors that have been associated with the spread of CA MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

What should I do if I have been diagnosed with CA MRSA?

1. Keep your wound clean and dry.
2. If you received antibiotics, take them as prescribed and complete the entire course of antibiotics.
3. If symptoms have not improved or are worsening return to your healthcare provider or return to the Emergency Department.

Is CA MRSA contagious and how can I prevent the spread of the infection?

1. **Cover your wound.** Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages. Follow your healthcare provider’s instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph and MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages or tape can be discarded with the regular trash.
2. **Clean your hands.** You, your family, and others in close contact should wash their hands frequently with soap(antibacterial) and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing the bandage or touching the infected wound.
3. **Do not share personal items.** Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.