SUPERBUG

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METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

Staph bacteria normally live on your skin and in your nose, usually without causing problems. Staph bacteria only become a problem when they cause infection.

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (**MRSA**) is a staph bacterium that is resistant to antibiotics. These antibiotics include methicillin, amoxicillin, and penicillin.

MRSA infections are more difficult to treat because they do not respond well to many types of antibiotics. Given enough time, bacteria can outsmart antibiotics so that these medications no longer work well. This is why MRSA is sometimes called a **superbug**.

Antibiotic resistance is not a new problem; resistant disease strains began emerging not long after the discovery of antibiotics more than 50 years ago.

Leading causes of antibiotic resistance include: unnecessary antibiotic use in humans; antibiotics in food and water; and germ mutation.

Staph infections generally start as small red bumps that resemble pimples, boils or spider bites. The most common symptoms of a staph infection are:

- A swollen, red, and sore area on the skin that may drain pus or other fluid.
- A warm feeling around the infected area.
- Fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches.
- Pain in the chest.
- Fatigue.
- General feeling of sickness.

The bacteria can also burrow deep into the body, causing potentially life-threatening infections in bones, joints, surgical wounds, the bloodstream, heart valves and lungs.

It is important to seek medical attention when a minor skin problem becomes infected. Drugs that treat ordinary staph infections aren't effective against MRSA, and their use could lead to a more serious illness.

Treatment of MRSA still responds to certain medications. Generally, the antibiotic vancomycin or other similar antibiotics have proved effective against particular strains. Your doctor may also lance and drain the infection.

Prevention of MRSA

- Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using 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
- Shower immediately after athletic games or practices
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors
- Maintain a clean environment
- Get tested if you suspect a wound may have an MRSA infection
- Use all antibiotics when prescribed even if your infection is getting better

Cleaning Products Effective Against MRSA

- Lysol Kitchen Spray
- Clorox 409-R
- ODO-BAN
- Microban QGC
- Lynx Pine Disinfectant

ANTIBIOTIC USE

One of the main causes of the antibiotic resistant super bugs are the too often or incorrect use of antibiotics.

Antibiotics are **not** useful against **viral** infections such as colds, coughs, the flu or acute bronchitis. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them could be harmful by leading to bacterial resistant germs. When this happens, illnesses last longer and the risk of complication and death increases.

So, do your part in promoting proper use of antibiotics by:

- Not expecting to take antibiotics every time you're sick.
- Not pressuring your doctor for antibiotics if you have a viral illness.
- Never take antibiotics without a prescription.
- Take all antibiotics when prescribed.
- Protect yourself from infection with good hygiene.