

STAPH SKIN INFECTIONS

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Concerns about MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) have risen in the public eye due to a recent report from the CDC and publicized incidents of infected students throughout the country.

What is Staphylococcus aureus (staph)?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics. However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections.

What is MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)?

Some staph bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to antibiotics called beta-lactams. While 25% to 30% of the population is colonized with staph, approximately 1% is colonized with MRSA.

What is community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)?

Infections that are not associated with a hospital stay are often referred to as CA-MRSA. These are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people.

Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?

Yes. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. However, many staph skin infections may be treated by draining the abscess or boil and may not require antibiotics. Drainage of skin boils or abscesses should only be done by a healthcare provider.

How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?

Factors that have been associated with the spread of 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.

Practice good hygiene:

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| 1) | Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. |
| 2) | Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed. |
| 3) | Avoid contact with other people's wounds or material contaminated from wounds (including sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage). |
| 4) | Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors. |

For additional information see: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html

This article is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about the disease described

above or think that you may have been exposed and are concerned, consult a health care provider.

STUDENT HOUSING EVACUATION DRILLS

University Fire Marshal's Office

Each year the Stanford Fire Marshal's Office works with the Dept. of Public Safety and the Housing Dept. to conduct evacuation drills for all graduate and undergraduate student housing facilities. Drills are scheduled in the evening hours during the first week of October and are conducted over five nights. We have found that students tend to be in the residences during these hours and it is our hope that we get the largest number of occupants to participate.

The goal of the drill is to familiarize students with the sight and sound of their building's fire alarm system and to get them to think of exiting the building utilizing different routes than the ones that they may normally use, specifically using the stairways in lieu of the elevators.

While the exact date that the drills are scheduled at is kept a secret from the students, Resident Assistants and Community Associates are provided with the drill schedule. We are strongly encouraging the participation of the RAs and CAs, and in order for them to be present we provide them with the date that the drill will be held in their residence.

Another goal of the evacuation drill is for students to become familiar with the location of the Emergency Assembly Point (EAP) for their residence. We stress to RAs and CAs that the EAP is where students need to report to be accounted for and to learn the nature of the emergency.

As of January 1 2008, all colleges and universities are required to conduct quarterly evacuation drills in student housing facilities. Campuses in other states have been required to perform quarterly evacuation drills and have greater obstacles such as extreme weather conditions to contend with.

The code now requires that evacuation drills be con-

ducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes and that the time of day that the drills are held at be scheduled at different hours of the day or evening. At least one of the four drills is required to be held during hours after sunset or before sunrise.

The evacuation drills for the fall quarter will go on as it has in past years but the Fire Marshal's Office will be planning with the Dept. of Public Safety and Housing Dept. for drills during the upcoming Winter, Spring and Summer Quarters.

THREE SAFETY RULES FOR LABS CONCERNING STANFORD'S PROCESS COOLING WATER SYSTEM

Occupational Health and Safety Program

- 1) Labs should not hook up to Stanford's process cooling water system (currently green in color) unless they work with the plumbing shop to make sure they have used pressure rated fittings and lines. Bset is to have the shop set up the connections and lines.
- 2) Labs cannot use tap water for cooling as this is once through cooling. (I think the FDCCS addresses this)
- 3) If labs do not want to hook up to process cooling water but rely on their own packaged cooling systems, they must design and build the system to prevent leaks. The plumbing shop is an excellent resource for assistance in designing and installing these systems.

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