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# AAP News

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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Staph skin infections creeping into communities

A bacterium is lurking in the most unexpected places. Community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA, commonly referred to as “staph”) has branched out from hospitals and nursing homes to cause skin infections in child care centers, schools, locker rooms and homes.

CA-MRSA affects approximately 30% of healthy people, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Some who test positive show no signs of MRSA, and others develop only small bumps on the surface of their skin. In more severe cases, CA-MRSA can go deeper into the soft tissue, causing a red, swollen, hot boil or abscess. It can even lead to pneumonia and bloodstream infections.

CA-MRSA has become resistant to certain antibiotics, including methicillin, penicillin and amoxicillin, but is treatable with other medications and procedures. The AAP advises that children who show signs of a skin infection, such as a red, hot or swollen wound on their skin or one that is draining pus, have it examined by their pediatrician. Skin bumps and wounds that are taking a long time to disappear also should be checked.

To prevent the spread of MRSA, the AAP suggests the following:

- Encourage children to practice good hygiene by washing

hands frequently with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds or using hand sanitizers.

- Use clean, dry bandages to cover cuts, scrapes and breaks in a child's skin and change the bandages daily. Children should participate in sports and in physical education classes only when wounds can be covered fully.
- Tell children never to share towels, razors, washcloths, personal care items or clothing with others.
- Discourage athletes from sharing equipment, and advise them to be aware of skin infections when participating in contact sports such as football or wrestling. CA-MRSA can spread through contact with soiled equipment and mats and in gyms and locker rooms.

— Trisha Koriath



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