

# Cornwall-Lebanon School District

## PARENT INFORMATION HANDOUT

### MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteria)

#### **What is MRSA?**

MRSA is a staph infection that is resistant to some antibiotics. Staph is commonly carried in the nose or on the skin of healthy individuals. It can cause a skin infection and more rarely a bloodstream infection. It is spread by skin-to-skin contact and by sharing objects such as towels, razors, and sports equipment.

#### **What should I look for?**

It most often appears as a skin infection, such as a pimple or boil that appears red, swollen, feels warm to the touch, and may have drainage. Those infected may think they were bitten by a spider. If the area does not improve, worsens, or spreads, medical attention should be sought immediately. Rarely, a fever may be present, and the infection may spread internally to organs by the bloodstream—this is extremely dangerous and treatment is required.

#### **How to prevent MRSA**

Remember that hand washing is still the best defense. Washing hands after touching keyboards and other common areas (such as doorknobs, faucets, sports equipment); after using the bathroom; and of course, before eating is a good approach to avoiding many infections, including MRSA.

Cleansing an infected area and keeping it covered is important. Daily showers and laundering clothing, especially sports clothing and equipment, reduces risk. Don't share personal items such as towels, razors, and toothbrushes.

Keeping your private spaces (lockers and desks) regularly cleaned with a disinfectant soap or hand wipe is also important.

#### **What are we doing?**

Our nursing staff disinfects common areas and equipment. We observe open sores for signs of MRSA, and require medical evaluation if suspected. We also require that prior to returning to school any affected student have a doctor-signed note which includes an approved back-to-school date and any precautions. Our nursing staff follows protocols created with the cooperation of our school physician. Custodial staff regularly cleans and disinfects student spaces, including the restrooms, water fountains, gymnasiums, showers and locker rooms.

#### **What should I do if I suspect my child has MRSA?**

Don't panic. Contact your healthcare provider for an evaluation. Contact the school so we can monitor students for other cases and take appropriate steps to reduce all students' risks. We will also consult with the Department of Health and our school physician to determine when parents should be notified.

#### **Additional References:**

PA Department of Health 1-877-PA-HEALTH

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://cdc.gov/ncid/dhqp/ar>