



**Nursing Department**  
231-933-5610

November 13, 2007

A great deal of media attention has been focused on community-associated methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (CA-MRSA) infections. Staphylococcal or “staph” germs are a common cause of skin and other infections. MRSA is a kind of staph infection that is resistant to treatment with certain antibiotics, but can usually be treated. MRSA is usually transmitted by skin-to-skin contact or by contact with shared items that have come in contact with someone else’s infection.

Traverse City Area Public Schools, in collaboration with the Grand Traverse County Health Department, follows the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for prevention of the transmission of these infections ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and search for MRSA in Schools). The guidelines include hand washing, surface cleaning and disinfecting to provide a safe, supportive learning environment.

Recently, we have been informed of one diagnosed case of the MRSA infection in the district. This is not considered by the Grand Traverse County Health Department as an outbreak. An outbreak consists of at least three diagnosed MRSA cases that are linked to each other. We want you to be aware of this situation and assure you the District will continue to follow accepted public health recommendations. Questions regarding these procedures can be directed to the School Nursing Department at 933-5610.

The following suggestions can help prevent the spread of MRSA and other infections:

#### **Personal Hygiene**

- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before handling food and after using the bathroom.
- Shower daily and after any athletic training or event.
- Do not share personal items.
- Use clothing or towels as a barrier between shared surfaces, like exercise equipment.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or shirtsleeve when sneezing or coughing.

#### **Wound Care**

- Cover skin trauma, such as abrasions or cuts, with a clean dry bandage until the wound is healed.
- Avoid touching other person’s wounds or soiled bandages.
- Watch for signs of an infection. See a healthcare provider if the wound becomes warm, swollen, red and painful or starts draining pus.
- If wound drainage cannot be fully contained under a bandage avoid close contact with other people and remain home until wound begins the healing process.

#### **Antibiotics**

- Use antibiotics only as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Don’t take antibiotics for viral infections like a cold.
- Don’t share or save antibiotics for later.

#### **Laundry and Cleaning**

- Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch or soiled surfaces such as phones, doorknobs and shared equipment using a cleaning product formulated to disinfect surfaces.
- Wash clothes and linens with detergent in the hottest suitable water temperature and dry in the dryer at the highest temperature that is safe for the fabric.

Again, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call your school nurse or the Nursing Department at 933-5610.