

# BALDWINSVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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JEANNE M. DANGLE  
Superintendent of Schools

## MEMORANDUM

To: Parents and Guardians of BCSD Students

From: Jeanne M. Dangle, Superintendent 

Date: October 17, 2007

Subject: **MRSA (Pronounced "mersa") - Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aereus**

You may or may not have heard about Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aereus (MRSA) that has recently been talked about in the media. The medical community has been aware of MRSA for a number of years. I want to communicate to you what MRSA is and also the steps the Baldwinsville Central School District has and will continue to follow to prevent any communicable disease such as MRSA.

MRSA is a type of bacteria that spreads through close skin-to-skin contact and/or contact with a contaminated surface. Anyone can get MRSA skin infections. MRSA is more common among hospital and nursing home patients, and more recently, athletes. MRSA skin infections are generally minor and first appear as pimples, boils or other similar skin conditions. However, MRSA is resistant to certain antibiotics and left untreated, this Staph infection can be serious.

We have taken steps to ensure that our physical education teachers, coaches and athletic trainers have been updated on communicable diseases including MRSA. We continue to educate our students and student athletes of good hygiene practices to protect themselves. Our School Nurse Practitioner has ensured that our school nurses have access to medically solid information so that they can act as advisors and clinicians in managing communicable diseases, including MRSA. Our Buildings and Grounds Department has always used and will continue to use a hospital grade disinfectant as part of our daily cleaning procedures.

The Onondaga County Health Department (OCHD) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicate that the best preventative measures include:

- ✓ Keeping cuts and scrapes clean and covered with bandages
- ✓ Frequent hand washing (either with hot water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer)
- ✓ Daily laundering of personal articles and hot drying of personal clothing items
- ✓ Refraining from sharing personal items, such as clothing, footwear, razors and towels

We will be providing a link to other source material that you can access through our district webpage regarding MRSA. To access this information, go to [www.bville.org](http://www.bville.org), click on School Nurses' Page.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding health related issues, please contact your healthcare provider.

\* Please see reverse for Questions & Answers regarding Staph/MRSA Skin Infections \*

## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS REGARDING STAPH/MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS**

### **WHAT IS STAPH AND WHERE DID IT COME FROM?**

Staph or Staphylococcus is bacterium that is inherent to the skin of all humans. If 50 people were swabbed or “tested” for Staph, all 50 test results would be positive. A Staph bacterium becomes a problem when it enters or infects the body through a cut or open wound. Staph infection was initially limited to hospitals, but is now contracted in the community through skin-to-skin contact. **That’s why frequent hand washing is so important!** Most Staph infections can be treated successfully with antibiotics. However, some strains of Staph infection, such as MRSA, cannot be treated successfully with antibiotics.

### **WHAT IS MRSA?**

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aereus or MRSA, (pronounced “mersa”) is a kind of Staph infection that mutated and becomes resistant to most antibiotics. About 25-30% of the U.S. population carries MRSA on their bodies at any time without any signs or symptoms. Symptoms of Staph or MRSA skin infections include pimples, rashes, pus-filled boils (especially those that feel warm), painful, red or swollen skin. If left untreated, Staph/MRSA can cause more serious infections.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A STAPH/MRSA SKIN INFECTION?**

Keep the area clean and covered. See your provider with any questions, especially if the infection is large, painful, warm to the touch or draining.

### **HOW IS STAPH/MRSA SPREAD?**

Staph/MRSA lives on skin and survives on objects for 24 hours or more. Staph is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact, such as shaking hands, wrestling, or other direct contact with the skin of an infected person. Staph is also spread by contact with items that have been touched by people with Staph like cosmetics, razors, towels, shared athletic equipment in the gym or on the field. People who have skin infections should be very careful to avoid spreading their infection to others.

### **HOW CAN I PREVENT A STAPH INFECTION?**

As recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

- Regular hand washing with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they have healed.
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as cosmetics, razors, towels, or washcloths.
- Clean objects that you share with other persons such as athletic equipment, before you use it.
- Wash clothes and other items that become soiled in hot water with bleach, if possible. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air drying, also helps kill Staph/MRSA in clothes.
- Don’t be afraid to ask your healthcare professional to wash their hands before providing you with treatment.