

News Release

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The Tuscola County Health Department has received questions about methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) as a result of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study on MRSA in the United States and recent student deaths associated with MRSA.

Staphylococcus aureus, referred to as “staph”, is a bacterium common in the environment and is often carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. It may cause skin infections and can be treated with or without antibiotics depending on the severity of the infection. MRSA is a variation of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat.

Staph and MRSA can cause skin infections such as pimples, boils, cellulitis and rashes that may be red, swollen and painful, often containing pus. In some situations, more serious infections can cause pneumonia and blood stream infections. Staph, including MRSA is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. It may also be spread by direct skin contact with surfaces or items infected with staph.

MRSA is treatable and preventable. Treatments may include good wound and skin care including draining abscesses and keeping wounds clean and dry. In some cases, the use of antibiotics is required. Patients should take all the doses of antibiotics they are given, unless their doctor tells them to stop.

Prevention steps include:

- * To practice good hygiene:
 1. Keep hands clean by frequent handwashing with soap and water or by using an Alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed.
- * Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages
- * Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, razors, bar soap or clothing
- * See a doctor if you have symptoms of a staph infection or a sore that does not heal

Schools, workplaces, and other facilities should take the following steps if someone is reported to have MRSA:

- Confirm the diagnosis with a physician
- Follow routine infection control precautions
- Follow routine procedures for cleaning the surfaces in your facility

Persons diagnosed with MRSA can normally attend school or work with a physicians approval as long as the wound is kept covered.

For further information related to MRSA, please contact the Health Department at 989-673-8114 or visit www.cdc.gov