

Lately there have been news reports about MRSA. This fact sheet is to help answer some questions that you may have about MRSA and cystic fibrosis (CF).

1. **What is MRSA?** MRSA stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. It causes an infection that is resistant to several common antibiotics. There are some antibiotics that can kill MRSA.
2. **How is MRSA spread from one person to another?** MRSA can be spread from one person to another through casual contact or through contact with objects that have become covered with it. It can also be spread through skin-to-skin contact with others, such as athletes involved in football and wrestling and with people who have cuts or wounds.
3. **How do I know if I have MRSA on my skin?** Most of these skin infections are boils and abscesses and are not serious. However, infections that are more serious do occur.
4. **How is MRSA treated?** MRSA can be treated with some antibiotics.
5. **Do people with CF get MRSA?** Anyone can get MRSA. Some people with CF have MRSA growing in their sputum.
6. **How does it affect people with CF?** It may worsen lung disease. Whether or not people with CF should be treated for MRSA in their sputum is up to the patient and healthcare provider.
7. **How can I avoid getting MRSA?** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the best way to protect yourself from MRSA is to do the following.
 - Do good hygiene (e.g., keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after exercising);
 - Cover skin scrapes or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed;
 - Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin.
 - When using exercise equipment:
 - a. Clean handholds, bars, control panels, etc. before and after use with a disinfectant or alcohol based cleaner. Many exercise facilities provide materials so the exerciser can clean the equipment.
 - b. Use a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches.
 - Also, people with CF should cough into a tissue, throw it away and do good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of germs.
8. **Can someone with CF and MRSA spread it to others?** Yes, someone with CF can spread MRSA.

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9. **If my child's school has MRSA, shouldn't the school be closed?** No, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that in general, it is not necessary to close schools to "disinfect" them for MRSA. MRSA skin infections are spread mainly by skin-to-skin contact and touching surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection. This is why good hand hygiene is so important to avoid getting MRSA.
10. **If I or my child has MRSA, how can I avoid spreading it?** Activities to avoid getting MRSA will help avoid spreading it. Good hand hygiene and coughing into a tissue and throwing it away in a covered trashcan are the key things to do to avoid MRSA.
11. **What is "good hand hygiene"?** Good hand hygiene means keeping your hands clean by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or washing with soap and water. You should do hand hygiene:
- After coughing or sneezing
 - After blowing your nose
 - Before eating
 - After going to the bathroom
 - Before and after breathing treatments
 - Before and after airway clearance
 - Before taking medicine
 - If your hands look dirty, use soap and water
 - After using common pens, handrails, grocery carts, exercise equipment, automated teller machines (ATMs)
12. **If I or my child has MRSA in the sputum, should I or my child stay home from work or school?** No, unless your doctor tells you to stay home. Doing good hand hygiene, coughing into a tissue, and throwing it away into a covered trashcan, can help avoid spreading MRSA.
13. **Should I notify the school if my child has MRSA?** Consult with your CF doctor and CF healthcare team about whether or not the school should be notified.

To learn more about community acquired MRSA, visit the Web sites of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the National Library of Medicine.

- General information - http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html
- MRSA and schools - <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>
- The National Library of Medicine - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mrsa.html>

To learn about germs and cystic fibrosis, visit the CF Foundation's Web site:

- How to Avoid Germs with CF - <http://www.cff.org/LivingWithCF/Webcasts/ArchivedWebcasts/>
- Respiratory: What You Should Know About Germs - <http://www.cff.org/UploadedFiles/LivingWithCF/StayingHealthy/Germs/WhatYouShouldKnow/WhatYouShouldKnowAboutGerms.pdf>
- Respiratory: Stopping the Spread of Germs - <http://www.cff.org/UploadedFiles/LivingWithCF/StayingHealthy/Germs/StoppingTheSpread/StoppingSpreadGerms.pdf>

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