



November 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian and MMSD Staff:

This letter is sent to you to provide information about a health issue that has recently received considerable attention in the media and is understandably a concern for staff and for parents.

Community acquired Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (CA MRSA) infections are caused by bacteria that have developed resistance to the antibiotics usually used to treat persons with staph infections. CA MRSA is normally carried in the nose or on the skin of about 1% of the population. CA MRSA usually cause mild skin infections such as abscesses or boils but occasionally may cause more serious skin and soft tissue infections. Serious infections are rare in healthy individuals.

An infection caused by CA MRSA usually looks like an abscess or boil and can worsen to include redness, warmth, swelling, pain, and discharge. It can be mistaken for a spider or insect bite. CA MRSA infections can be treated with several commonly used antibiotics and in some cases, may be treated without the use of antibiotics.

CA MRSA is spread by direct person to person (skin to skin) contact or contact with contaminated surfaces, equipment or personal items such as razors, soap, clothing, and towels.

The following guidelines help reduce the transmission of CA MRSA in the school setting. You can reduce your risk by practicing these guidelines and encouraging your students to do the same:

- Wash your hands often. Wash with soap and warm water for at least 15-20 seconds. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are as effective as soap and water. MMSD has liquid soap dispensers in all student and staff bathrooms and in areas used by athletes. Additionally, at this time, all elementary school classrooms have disinfectant hand wipes (green top canisters) available for student and staff use.
- Wash and cover cuts and scrapes.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, sports equipment or uniforms, razors, soap bars, water bottles, etc.
- Contact your health care provider promptly if a sore or cut becomes red, oozes fluid, causes pain or is not healing.
- Shower after physical activity or sports.
- Routinely clean surfaces, sports equipment and gear as recommended. MMSD athletic facilities are cleaned regularly using appropriate disinfectants. Special attention is given to mats and other surfaces that come into contact with athlete's skin. Athletic uniforms are laundered according to guidelines.
- Talk to your health care provider about what precautions are necessary to prevent spread at home or at school if you have or had an MRSA infection.

Early treatment of suspected CA MRSA is important. If you are concerned about a wound or sore on yourself, consult your health care provider. The MMSD website (www.madison.k12.wi.us) has links to additional resources with information about MRSA in the Hot Topics section. The Wisconsin Division of Public Health Disease Fact Sheet on CA MRSA can be accessed at

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/factsheets/CommunityAssociatedMRSA.htm>