Staphylococcal Infections

Staphylococcus aureus (or Staph for short) is a germ that may cause infections, especially on broken skin or wounds. Methicillin is a drug sometimes used to treat Staph infections. If the germ is resistant to methicillin, it is called **MRSA**. Methicillin and some other drugs may not work to treat the infection. However, there are other antibiotic drugs that may be used that will treat the infection.

Your caregiver may do a culture from your wound, skin, or other site. This will tell him/her that you have MRSA present. Sometimes healthy people carry MRSA, but it may also cause an infection.

Staph infections, including MRSA can spread from one person to another by contact with an infected person. You may prevent spreading an MRSA infection to those you live with or others around you by following these steps:

- Keep infections and pus or drainage material covered with clean dry bandages. Follow your caregiver's instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain MRSA and spread the germ (*bacteria*) to others.
- Advise your family and other close contacts to **wash their hands frequently** with soap and warm water. This should be done especially if they change your bandages or touch the infected wound or infectious materials.
- Avoid sharing personal items (towels, washcloth, razor, clothing, or uniforms) that may have had contact with the infected wound.
- Wash linens and clothes that become soiled, with hot water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.
- Tell any healthcare providers who treat you that you have an MRSA infection. In the hospital steps will be taken to prevent the spread of MRSA.
- Ask your caregiver about return to school or return to work if you have a Staph or MRSA infection.
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a chronic or permanent injury, pain, and disability. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

Staph and MRSA infections can become very serious and you should contact your caregiver if your infection gets worse. To fight the infection, follow your doctor's instructions for wound care and take all medicines as prescribed.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased pus coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, red streaks, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.

Document Released: 03/09/2004 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
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