



## KNOW HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MRSA

You've heard of the "superbug." But do you really know what it is? And how to protect yourself from it? The ways to make your family safer are simpler than you think.

### WHAT IS MRSA?

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is a bacterium that causes infections in different parts of the body. It is tougher to treat than most strains of staph infection and has been called a "superbug" by the media because of its resistance to commonly used antibiotics. Once largely a problem contained to hospitals, it is now a growing problem in healthy people. This type of MRSA is called community-associated MRSA, or CA-MRSA.

### WHEN TO SUSPECT CA-MRSA

MRSA most often appears as a skin infection, like a boil or abscess. Be suspicious of any wound that is swollen, red, painful or pus-filled. If you are already being treated for an infection, watch for signs that your medication isn't working. Call your doctor if the infection is not better after three or four days, or if you develop a fever.

### COMMON SENSE IS THE BEST DEFENSE

Follow these simple practices to help avoid MRSA or to aid in proper treatment and care should you think you have contracted MRSA:

- **Wash your hands.** Scrub hands with soap briskly for at least 15 seconds each time you wash. Wash your hands frequently at intervals throughout the day and especially when you come into contact with shared or public equipment, spaces and belongings.
- **Keep personal items personal.** Avoid sharing items such as towels, razors, clothing and athletic equipment.
- **Keep wounds covered.** Keep cuts and abrasions clean and covered with sterile, dry bandages until healed.
- **Shower after all practices and games.** Try not to skip a shower thinking you will just do it later.
- **When in doubt — sit out.** If you have a wound that's draining or appears infected, consider sitting out until the wound has healed.
- **Get tested.** If you have a skin infection that requires treatment, ask your doctor if you should be tested for MRSA.
- **Use antibiotics appropriately.** When you're prescribed an antibiotic, take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better. If your infection isn't improving after a few days of taking an antibiotic, contact your doctor.

For more information on MRSA or to find an OhioHealth physician, call (614) 4-HEALTH or visit [www.ohiohealth.com](http://www.ohiohealth.com) for the latest.



**JOSEPH J. RUANE, DO**

*Medical Director of McConnell Spine, Sport & Joint Center*

*Medical Director for the Columbus Blue Jackets*

*Member of the OhioHealth Sports Medicine Institute*

