

Patient Information:

**Information for Dealing With Staph or MRSA
Skin Infections**

- ◆ About Skin Infections
- ◆ Self-Care
- ◆ When To See Your HCP
- ◆ Dealing with Staph or MRSA


ABOUT SKIN INFECTIONS¹

Skin Infections start when bacteria get into a cut or scrape. Even ones you can't see (i.e. shaving and through eczema, psoriasis and acne conditions). Bacteria live on everyone's skin and usually cause no harm. But when staphylococcus bacteria get into your body through a break in the skin, they can cause a "staph" infection. Staph infections may spread to other people by skin-to-skin contact and from shared items such as towels, soap clothes and sports equipment. Also, beware of bedding with wound drainage on it.

Staph infections are becoming harder to treat. Some germs are "resistant" to antibiotics. They are called MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus)

THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT INFECTIONS IS SIMPLE — WASH YOUR HANDS.
Washing your hands often with soap and warm water also helps to prevent colds & flu. Antibacterial soaps are not needed.¹

Surprising Fact



a yellow crust. It can be spread by scratching. This infection often occurs on the face.²

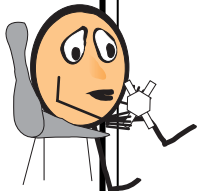
- Infected hair roots (follicles)**—small bumps under the skin at the base of the hair. They may itch.¹

WHEN TO SEE YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:

- You have signs of infection such as pain, redness, swelling and heat, and oozing pus or blood¹ or other drainage.

- New symptoms develop during or after you get treated.¹

Immediate Self-Care:

- Wash cuts, scrapes and sores with soap and water; then keep them clean and cover them with bandages (changed 1-3 times per day).²
 - Consult Schiffert Health Center's Wound Care Information Sheet located at <http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/pdf/WoundCare.pdf> and then call us to make an appointment.
 - Avoid contact with other people's cuts or sores and any materials that have come in contact with them.¹
 - Avoid sharing personal items such as soap, towels, razors and sports equipment.¹
 - Clean and wash sports clothing and equipment after each use.¹
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DEALING WITH STAPH OR MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS:

- DO NOT squeeze or try to pop bumps or pimples.
 - WASH YOUR HANDS before and after handling dressings or wound site, even if you wear gloves.
 - DO NOT use hot tubs, swimming pools or take a soaking bath until wounds are healed. Warm (not hot) showers are okay. DO NOT use loofas, sponges, or body poufs for bathing. Avoid harsh soaps like Dial® and Irish Spring® and don't bathe with bar soaps. (Bar soaps can harbor bacteria)
- Cleanse the wound areas as directed with a cleanser like PHISOHEX® cleanser* three times a week until wounds are healed. Always use an unscented moisturizer on your body to prevent dry skin. During these times you can use cleanser around the wound areas if your body's skin becomes too dry or irritated.
- Use paper towels to dry the wound site(s) after bathing to avoid spreading the infection through wound contact with your bath towel.
- NO SHAVING until wound(s) is healed. You may use a depilatory (ex: Nair®). **THROW AWAY** your old razor! Use only disposable razors for parts of body you can shave until wounds are completely healed.
- If wounds are located on the face, eyelids, etc., **THROW AWAY** appropriate facial make-up. (Remember...make-up should not be used when wounds are located in facial

Some common skin infections caused by staph are¹:

- Boils**—tender, red lumps that swell and get white heads like very big pimples. Boils form on oily or moist skin such as the neck, armpits, groin and buttocks. They may break open and ooze pus or blood.¹
- Impetigo**—blisters with fluid in them, which pop and get

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areas.)

- ☑ DO NOT SHARE with other people: lotions, towels, clothes, razors, make-up, soaps and/or sports equipment that you used while you had wound(s). Again, THROW disposable items away. Ask your practitioner or your wound care nurse for further information.
- ☑ SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT (including contact sports and/or sexual activity) can spread the skin infection. Even with the wound covered by a dressing there is still risk of spreading the infection — SO DISCUSS your risks with your practitioner or wound care nurse.
- ☑ mild moisturizing liquid body wash such as Camay® or Dove® soap (or generic) in liquid form (prevents removal of the protective acid mantle on the skin which protects against microbes). Throw away any bar soap.
- ☑ FINISH ALL ANTIBIOTICS THE PRACTITIONER ORDERS FOR YOU — the last few pills kill the toughest germs.

☑ The bacteria may be concentrated up in your nose so USE PROPER RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE (disposable tissues; sneeze into your sleeve; alcohol gel hand sanitizer to clean hands). KEEP your hands away from your face.



☑ To help prevent recurrences of this type of infection, avoid taking very hot tub baths or showers. Use a

WASH YOUR HANDS
BEFORE
AND
AFTER
TOUCHING YOUR
EYES, NOSE,
MOUTH
OR FACE!

Helpful
Prevention
Activity



☑ Care recommendations may vary based on the individual, number of wounds and where the wounds are located on the body.

* PHISOHEX® (brand of hexachlorophene detergent cleanser) is an antibacterial sudsing emulsion for topical administration. PHISOHEX® contains a colloidal dispersion of hexachlorophene 3% (w/w) in a stable emulsion consisting of entsufon sodium, petrolatum, lanolin cholesterol, methylcellulose, polyethylene glycol, polyethylene glycol monostearate, lauryl myristyl iethanolamide, sodium enzoate, and water. pH is adjusted with hydrochloric acid. Entsufo sodium is a synthetic detergent.

¹ Source: Washington State Department of Health DOH Pub 130-046 reprinted with permission.

² Source: Adapted from Washington State Department of Health DOH Pub 130-046 with permission.