

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) Facts

The following information is for the campus community to better communicate the risks, prevention methods and steps the College is taking to address the issue of MRSA on campus. MRSA is a type of “staph” infection that is not spread through the air, but among persons having close, physical contact with others who are already infected. It is most commonly found in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities but can also be transmitted within the community, most often amongst players of close-contact sports, such as football, wrestling and fencing, where the sharing of equipment like protective clothing is common practice. MRSA, like other contagious disease, may also spread through indirect contact, such as by touching shared items like towels, sheets, used bandages, clothing, and sports equipment, including items found in fitness centers, equipment areas, and locker rooms. This “Staph” bacterium is commonly carried on the skin, or in the nose of a person who looks healthy. The carrier may not appear ill, or have symptoms that raise concern. However, a person with a skin condition that presents as a pimple, boil, or other lesion that drains, or has the potential to drain, should seek qualified medical care, such as our Student Health Service in Academic Village, Roosevelt Hall or your personal Health Care Provider who has knowledge of the possible conditions.

Possible risk factors that may permit the spread of infection may include:

- Not following good housekeeping or hygiene practices.
- Not covering or properly protecting wounds of the skin.
- Sharing clothing and protective equipment that may abrade or otherwise traumatize the skin.
- Sharing items such as cups, eating utensils, cosmetics, toothpaste, soap bars, lubricants, razors, sheets, and towels.
- Utilizing equipment that has not been properly cleaned or laundered.

The college is committed to providing the campus and community with an environment that minimizes the risk of illness or injury and has adopted the following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health. The most effective policies and procedures to prevent the spread of any contagious disease, including MRSA is to focus on personal health, good hygiene and proper enforcement.

Every person on campus should:

- Follow good housekeeping practices by separating personal clothing from others; cleaning surfaces between users and properly disposing of blood and body fluid soiled material.
- Wash hands and exposed areas of the body frequently using hot (not scalding) water and antibacterial soap and/or alcohol base hand cleaners.
- Cover all wounds properly, and if necessary, exclude oneself from physical contact or behavior that may place others at risk.
- DO NOT share personal items such as cups, eating utensils, cosmetics, toothpaste, soap bars, lubricants, razors, towels, sheets and/or sports' equipment that has not been properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Utilize cleaning materials that are recommended for the type or bacteria/viruses that present the risk.
- Seek the assistance and expertise of the SUNY Old Westbury College Student Health Services in Academic Village, Roosevelt Hall (516.876.3250) whenever you identify a potential area of concern.
- Know and use this website: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov> They have a Q&A about Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus in schools within that site: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools>