



Woodland School District 50

October 24, 2007

Dear Parents:

It is likely you have heard in the news about Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus better known as MRSA. It is a form of staph infection that does not respond to routine treatment. We learned late Monday that we have a student in the Middle School who has been identified as having MRSA. The student is undergoing proper medical treatment and is expected to return to school soon. We have been in contact with the Lake County Health Department to be sure we are taking all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection. We offer the following information to enhance your awareness of MRSA and gain your assistance in preventing further cases of the infection.

MRSA Facts:

- MRSA infections have been around for a long time, causing mild to severe illness. It is a kind of infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as a “staph infection”. Mild infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. It can be mistaken as a spider or insect bite. On occasion staph bacteria can cause much more serious skin infections, as well as bloodstream infections, pneumonia etc.
- Staph infections are passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items. The bacteria may live in people’s noses and on their skin and most of the time does not cause any problem. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes cause infection. MRSA is not spread through the air.

Practical Advice for Staff:

- Observe children for open wounds. If any are draining or contain pus, refer the child to the school nurse.
- Encourage hand washing before eating and after toileting.
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wash their hands, cover their wounds, and not share personal items and towels.

Practical Advice for Parents:

- Clean wounds and cover them with a clean, dry bandage. Wounds that do not heal properly need medical attention. The only way to determine if an infection is caused by MRSA is through laboratory testing orders by a physician or other health care provider.
- Teach children to wash their hands regularly, such as before eating and after toileting.
- Be sure your family members use antibiotics properly. Take all that are prescribed, even if the symptoms stop before the prescription is used up. Do not share prescriptions.
- Children who participate in sporting events should wash their hands after each practice and game. They should not share equipment, uniforms, towels, or other personal items (e.g. razor). Wash uniforms and towels with hot water and detergent after each use and dry thoroughly in a hot dryer.

General Disinfection Practices

- In athletics, mats, benches or other shared athletic equipment that might have skin contact will be disinfected after each game or practice.
- Contaminated surfaces will be cleaned with an EPA registered cleaner or bleach solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- Routine cleaning will continue on all other surfaces because the bacteria live on the skin, so they may be reintroduced into any environment at any time.

Further information is available on the Illinois Department of Public Health website: <http://www.idph.state.il/ushealth/infect/MRSAProvider.htm> or the Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/index.htm.

If you have further questions please contact your School Principal or the Health Clinic:

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Intermediate School: Julia Plescica at 847-596-5910 (jplescica@disr50.net)
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Elementary West: Kari Lewis at 847-856-3641 (klewis@dist50.net)
Primary: Robin Payne at 847-856-6478 (rpayne@dist50.net)

Sincerely,

Joy Swoboda, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools