



UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #377
ATCHISON COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
"Where Success is Measured One Student at a Time"

October 29, 2007

Dear Parents:

We are writing to inform you of a health issue that has received a great deal of national attention and understandably is a concern for parents. Schools throughout our region and nationwide have been reporting outbreaks of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* known as MRSA. This bacterial skin infection is resistant to traditional antibiotics and could cause serious health consequences if not treated early.

At this time there are no known cases of MRSA in our school district. Nevertheless, we have taken precautionary measures that involve increasing the frequency of sanitizing high risk areas in our schools including restrooms, water fountains, locker rooms, fitness/weight rooms and physical education areas. Our custodial staff uses EPA-registered products effective against MRSA in the sanitization process. All staff members have received prevention information and teachers are working with students on following good hygiene practices. All physical education teachers and coaches are educating our students how important it is that they do not share towels, water bottles and other personal items such as razors or make-up.

We are asking that you help us reinforce the importance of proper hygiene to your children and remind all that the best way to prevent the spread of any infection is frequent hand washing with warm water and soap. Early treatment of suspected MRSA is important. If your child shows signs of a skin infection, redness, swelling, thick yellow drainage, contact your doctor.

As parents and educators, we must all share in the responsibility for educating our children about daily hygiene practices that will help ensure their safety. It is equally vital that we educate them on the importance of reporting any signs of a skin infection. By working together we can give our children the tools and knowledge on how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

We have included additional information and website links on the reverse side. If you have additional questions please feel free to contact your principal or the school nurse.

Respectfully,

Stephen E. Wiseman
Superintendent of Schools

Kathy Albers
School Nurse

Methicillin-Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA)

What is Staphylococcus aureus or Staph?

Staph is a type of bacteria. It may cause skin infections that look like pimples or boils. Skin infections caused by Staph may be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Some Staph (known as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA) are resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat. The information on this page applies to both Staph and MRSA.

Who gets Staph infections?

Anyone can get a Staph infection. People are more likely to get a Staph infection if they have:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

How serious are Staph infections?

Most Staph skin infections are minor and may be easily treated. Staph also may cause more serious infections, such as infections of the bloodstream, surgical sites, or pneumonia. Sometimes, a Staph infection that starts as a skin infection may worsen. It is important to contact your doctor if your infection does not get better.

How are Staph infections treated?

Treatment for a Staph skin infection may include taking an antibiotic or having a doctor drain the infection. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save them to use later.

How do I keep Staph infections from spreading?

- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Keep your cuts and scrapes clean and cover them with bandages
- Do not touch other people's cuts or bandages
- Do not share personal items like towels or razors

Website links:

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>

The Mayo Clinic

www.mayoclinic.com/health/mrsa/DS00735/DSECTION=2