

MRSA Staph Bacteria Superbugs: Prevention & Hygiene Tips

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Get Fit and Be Strong with “Proactive Wellness” to strengthen your immune system then follow the hygiene guidelines below!

Hand Washing: Thoroughly wash hands with anti-bacterial soap and small amount of water by *pressing and scrubbing soap into all areas of hands and fingers* for ≈20-30 seconds.

Hand Sanitizer & Wipes: Use “alcohol-based” hand rub like *Purell®* or equivalent. Thoroughly press sanitizer into *all areas* of hands and fingers. Antibacterial wipes can also be used when washing and sanitizer gels are not available. *Wet Ones®* make single-wipe packages for pocket or purse and pop-up canisters of wipes are also available, but do NOT kill MRSA. Make sure the wipes are approved for “human skin” and personal hygiene because some pop-up wipes are bleached based and intended for hard surfaces only which can be damaging to skin.

Cover Draining Wounds: An open and draining wound, or one covered with pus, is not only a portal of “exit” for transmitting MRSA to another person, but also a portal of “entry” for becoming infected with MRSA. Keep open and draining wounds covered and away from others!

Skin-to-Skin Contact: Avoid skin-to-skin contact with others that have open wounds. This is not always possible in sport settings such as football, wrestling, martial arts, and other combative activities which are even more reason to wash your body thoroughly as soon as possible after the skin-to-skin contact activities.

Cleaning & Irrigation of Skin: Beyond generous flushing with clean water and washing with antibacterial soap, topical antiseptics such as *Hibiclens® (chlorhexidine topical)* can be used to fight MRSA. *Chlorhexidine topicals* kill germs on skin and are used before surgeries with healthcare providers to reduce the risk of infections.

Sharing Personal Items: *Never share towels and razors!* MRSA infections have been caused in sport settings by sharing these personal items. Avoid sharing washcloths, clothing, or uniforms that have not been properly cleaned. Many athletes shave body parts like legs and chest even if they aren’t body builders. Shaving can create small openings in the skin leaving the person at-risk for infections when sharing a towel with a MRSA-infected teammate.

Clothing & Laundry: Wash clothes in question with detergent and HOT water (>140 degrees) then dry on HOT to further kill bacteria. Bleach can also be added as an extra precaution. It is recommended after visiting a clinical setting such as a hospital or nursing home, to change clothes immediately. Doctors are also being encouraged to begin wearing lab coats again as a protective skin barrier to MRSA and other infections.

- **Gyms & Exercise Equipment:** In addition to not sharing personal items like towels, many gyms now have special antibacterial solutions available in the form of sprays or towelettes. *Clini-Tech Spray®* is an EPA-registered and hospital-grade disinfectant (www.medtrol.com) that kills MRSA, HIV-1, Hepatitis C, and many other forms of infection. *Gym Wipes®* (www.gymwipes.com) are EPA-registered antibacterial disinfectant towelettes that kill 99.9% of germs. These are the products I’m using for my corporate clients, and both will decrease the risk of infection and cross contamination in your exercise setting. ***Make sure your gym has a hygiene process in place for dealing with MRSA infections and blood-borne pathogens.*** Many commercial gyms today still do not know what MRSA is or how to deal with it! ***Make sure to do YOUR part! Wear a shirt and wipe sweat off equipment when finished with your set! Insist that others do the same!***

* Ron Jones (2.13.07)