

## STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS INFECTION FACT SHEET

### **What is a staph infection?**

*Staphylococcus aureus* is a bacteria. Called "staph" for short, it is one of the most common germs found on people's skin and in their noses. 20-30% of the general public are nasal carriers. Most of the time it doesn't do any harm, but sometimes staph gets into the body and causes an infection. This infection can be minor (such as pimples or boils) or serious (such as blood infections).

### **What are the symptoms of staph infection?**

Local redness and warmth of the infected area with or without pus. Examples of localized infections are boils, impetigo, wound infections, and infections of hair follicles (folliculitis). Such infections can result in a pustule (bump on the skin filled with pus) that can become reddened, hard, and painful. Most infections are uncomplicated, but the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and other body sites and cause severe illness.

### **Who can get a staph infection?**

Anyone; individuals most at risk are those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, eczema, and lung disease.

### **How is staph spread?**

Staph is most commonly spread through contact with a person who has a staph lesion. Hands and touching are the most important means of transmission.

### **Is there treatment for a staph infection?**

Yes, antibiotics are available to treat staph infections. However, some staphylococcus bacteria are resistant to certain antibiotics. If prescribed antibiotics, it is important to take as directed by your physician.

### **How can staph infections be prevented?**

Careful hand washing is the single most effective way to control spread of MRSA. If you have a skin infection: Keep the infected area covered with a clean dry bandage. Pus is very infectious. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Keep nails short. Clean your bathroom and personal items often. Wash linens and clothes with hot water and bleach if you can. Dry clothes in a hot dryer. Don't share personal items such as soap, razors, towels, and clothing that may have touched the infected area or pus. Follow your healthcare provider's orders and take medicines as prescribed.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/>