

## STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS INFECTION

*Staphylococcus aureus*, called “staph” for short, 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).

### CAUSE

*Staphylococcus aureus*, bacteria

### SYMPTOMS

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.

### SPREAD

Spread occurs through contact with a person who has a staph lesion or is an asymptomatic carrier of a pathogenic strain. Hands are the most important means of transmission. Airborne transmission has been documented but does not play an important role in transmission.

### INCUBATION PERIOD (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

Variable

### CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

As long as lesions are draining or as long as an individual is a carrier.

### EXCLUSION

Child care and School: If draining sores are present and cannot be completely covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage or if the person cannot maintain good personal hygiene. Children who are only colonized do not need to be excluded.

### TREATMENT

Many staph infections can be treated with drainage of pus. A healthcare provider will decide if antibiotics are needed. More serious infections can require hospitalization and treatment with intravenous (IV) antibiotics. Some strains of staph have developed resistance to some antibiotics. Such strains are known as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or “MRSA.” If prescribed antibiotics, it is important to take as directed by a medical professional.

### PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly and frequently, especially if you are in contact with staph sores/lesions.
- Wear disposable medical gloves when touching any draining sores or changing bandages.
- Keep wounds clean and covered with a bandage.

- Dispose of bandages in a plastic bag immediately to prevent contamination of surfaces. Close the plastic bag and dispose in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces or objects daily, or when soiled

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