

October 29, 2007

Dear Parents,

With all the media coverage regarding Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA recently, we thought it would be helpful to provide you with some basic information to help you understand MRSA.

MRSA is a kind of Staphylococcus or “staph” which is bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. About 25-30% of the population carries staph on their bodies without symptoms or infection, but if it gets into cuts or skin abrasions, it may cause skin infections. About 1% of the population carries MRSA. Staph, including MRSA, is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact, or contact with items that have been touched by people with staph.

Staph can cause many kinds of skin infections, like pimples, boils, and rashes or abscesses. If a child develops any of these symptoms you should consult your health care provider for evaluation. Children may require exclusion from school when lesions are not able to be adequately covered with a dry dressing.

Regular hand washing is the best way to prevent getting and spreading staph/MRSA. Using a hand sanitizer is also recommended especially after direct contact with another person’s skin. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they have healed. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, toothbrushes, razors, soap and eating utensils. Sharing these items may transfer staph from one person to another.

The best way to prevent skin infections is to simply wash your hands. Good personal hygiene will also safeguard you from these types of infections. Keeping your skin healthy, and avoid getting dry, cracked skin, especially during the winter helps keep staph/MRSA on the surface of your skin from causing an infection underneath your skin.

If you have any questions please contact the Board of Health at 508-883-1500 x129.

Sincerely,

William T. Walsh
Chairman
Board of Health

The following web sites outside of the Town of Blackstone site are available which include additional information about MRSA:

Center for Disease Control – <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>

Mass. Department of Public Health - http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/antibiotic/mrsa_about.htm