

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

October 3, 2012

Staphylococcus aureus or Staph

Staph infections are caused by the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*, which many healthy people carry on their skin and in their noses without getting sick. But when skin is punctured or broken, staph bacteria can enter the wound and cause infections, which can lead to other health problems.

How Staph Infections spread

Staph bacteria can spread through the air, on contaminated surfaces, and from person to person. People can carry Staph from one area of their body to another, or pass it to other people via dirty hands and fingernails.

What to look for and when to call the doctor

In the first stage, which parents and kids often miss, the area of skin becomes mildly painful. Next, the skin turns red and begins to swell over the infected area. Finally, the skin above the infection becomes very tender and a whitish "head" may appear. The head may break, and the sore may begin to drain pus, blood, or an amber-colored liquid. These sores can appear anywhere on the skin.

It is recommended not to break and/or lance these areas at home. Please take the student to the doctor for professional assistance, so they can obtain a culture to see if the sore is Staph positive and be placed on the appropriate antibiotic. Any suspected cases need to be reported to health office and will be kept confidential.

How Staph infections are prevented

Infections can be prevented by practicing good hygiene, examples include:

Keep hands and fingernails clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; covering any open skin area such as abrasion or cuts with a clean dry bandage; avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors; using a barrier (e.g.; clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment; and wiping surfaces before and after use.

Please be assured that the school is taking all necessary precautions to ensure that our school is disinfected to prevent the spread of Staph as part of our continuing effort to protect the health and safety of our students, staff and community. The prevention and control of Staph and any other infectious disease requires the entire community's cooperation, so please take the time to read and observe prevention measures as well as what should be done in case your child should exhibit any symptoms.

Thanks for your assistance with keeping our kids healthy. Please contact the Health Office with any comments or questions at 231-4488 ext. 3911.

For more information, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/>

Yours in health,

AAS Health Office Staff