

Staphylococcus Infections

Nurse's Notes: This month I will highlight a growing trend in communities across our nation: Staphylococcus infections. "Staph" is a bacteria that usually infects broken skin or a wound. It causes an abscess to form. "Regular" staph infections may come to a head and drain themselves, needing no further treatment. However, some staph infections are much more serious and require immediate medical attention. If in doubt, SEE YOUR DOCTOR. Because of the widespread use of antibiotics, some staph infections are resistant to most antibiotics. MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) is a resistant strain of staph. MRSA was once confined to health care facilities like hospitals, now it is common in our communities. Approximately 30% of the population carry staph in our noses. Approximately 1% of people carry MRSA.

Like in the rest of the country, we have seen some cases of staph infections at STM. Some teachers, parents, and students have had infections with staph/MRSA this year. This is not intended to alarm anyone, but to educate on the signs, symptoms, and treatments. Signs of a staph infection include: red, hot, swollen area that gets larger daily. It may have a purple center, or pus draining that may be yellow. It is sometimes mistaken for a spider bite. If you or your child gets a skin infection like this, go to the doctor immediately. There are still a few antibiotics that can treat MRSA, but it is important to treat it early. Good handwashing skills are the best prevention, since it is spread by direct contact. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors. Keep cuts and scrapes COVERED until healed. At school, we strive to clean and cover any broken skin. Children with staph infections can come to school if their physician approves, but the infected area must be covered at all times.