

Proper handwashing is a simple way to prevent CA-MRSA

- Use warm water and liquid soap
- Rub hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- Wash the front and back of your hands, under nails, between fingers, and wrists
- Rinse off all soap
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Use the paper towel to turn off the water tap
- Use the paper towel to open the bathroom door
- Discard paper towel immediately upon leaving the bathroom.

Wash your hands frequently!!!

MRSA

What Body Artists Need to Know!



What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacterium that is resistant to many antibiotics including penicillin. Resistant bacteria are bacteria that can no longer be killed by antibiotics that were commonly used against them. MRSA usually causes skin infections, but it can also cause pneumonia and bloodstream infections. In the past, MRSA infections occurred only in hospitals and nursing homes, but they are becoming more common in the community. When MRSA infections occur in community settings, this is called community-associated MRSA or CA-MRSA infection.

CA-MRSA can be spread by close skin-to-skin contact, through openings in the skin such as cuts or scrapes, touching contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions and poor hygiene. Sharing needles, clothing, and personal care items such as razors, nail clippers, towels and bar soap are possible ways to spread CA-MRSA.

Should body artists be concerned?

Absolutely. Tattooing and body piercing both involve breaking the skin, and any time there is a break in the skin, infection is possible. Due to close contact with the skin of potentially infected individuals, body artists may be at risk for contracting CA-MRSA and/or spreading it to their clients.

What does a skin infection caused by MRSA look like?

MRSA skin infections can look like sores, blisters, rashes, and pimples. They have often been mistaken for spider bites.

If you are in doubt, ask your client to get a doctor's note before you perform any body art!

Examples of MRSA Skin Infections



How can I prevent MRSA?

Personal hygiene is very important in preventing and controlling the spread of MRSA. Keep hands clean throughout the day and wear gloves when performing body art. Even when you are wearing gloves, cross contamination is an issue. So when you are wearing gloves do not touch unsterile equipment, eat food, drink, or consume beverages.

What else can I do to prevent MRSA?

- Follow **NJ State Sanitary Code Chapter VIII, N.J.A.C. 8:27-1** body art regulations to protect yourself and your clients.
- Perform proper handwashing, aseptic, and sterilization techniques.
- Check your client's skin for cuts, scrapes, boils, pustules, pimples, rashes, or other openings in the skin.
- Ask clients if they have any skin infections or rashes on their body. If a client's skin (especially the site where the body art work will be performed) looks unhealthy, tell the client to return with a doctor's note that states it is okay for the client to get body art.

- Follow proper skin preparation procedures. Prepping the skin surface with an antiseptic is extremely important because it can help reduce the risk of infection. Always follow manufacturer instructions for use of antiseptic products. Do not dilute the product unless the manufacturer instructions say to do so.
- Provide clients with written aftercare procedures and make sure they understand them so they know how to prevent infections.
- Follow proper sterilization techniques.
- Disinfect all work surfaces including the client chair and light handles after each client.
- Keep your own skin clean, cover wounds, and do not share personal items (razors, bar soap, clothing).
- Contact the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services for more information.

What should I do if I think I have a MRSA skin infection?

- Stop performing body art until you get permission from a doctor.
- Keep the sore covered with a bandage at all times.
- Do not share clothing, towels, or personal care items.
- Seek medical care right away to prevent dangerous complications from developing.

Where can I learn more information?

NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services

<http://nj.gov/health/cd/mrsa/index.shtml>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html

NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services
Communicable Disease Service
Phone: 609-588-7500

Consumer and Environmental Health
Services
Public Health Safety and Sanitation
609-588-3124