

Staph Infection Prevention: Steps to Avoid Passing the Infection

- Keep the infected wound or skin lesion covered with clean, dry bandages. If there is pus or fluid, you'll need to change the dressing more frequently.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand rub after you touch the infected area or soiled bandages. Put used bandages and other disposable supplies that have touched the infected area into a separate trash bag and seal the bag securely before throwing it out with the regular garbage.
- Tell family members and anyone else you're in close contact with to wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water, and if possible, to avoid close physical contact with you until the infected area is completely healed.
- Make sure anyone who will be changing your bandages, cleaning the infected area, or touching anything that might have come in contact with the wound puts on clean, disposable, non-sterile gloves and disposes of them carefully.
- Do not share towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or any other personal item that may have been contaminated by wound drainage.
- Use a household disinfectant or a solution of one tablespoon of bleach mixed in one quart of water (prepared fresh each day) to disinfect all non-disposable items and surfaces that may have come in contact with the infected area, wound drainage, or soiled supplies.
- Wash soiled linens and clothes with hot water and laundry detergent. Dry them in a hot dryer, if possible.
- Wash utensils and dishes in the usual manner, with dish detergent and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- Avoid participating in contact sports or other physical activities that entail skin-to-skin contact until the infection has completely healed.
- Tell any caregivers or healthcare providers you see during this period that you have a drug-resistant staph infection.

Source: Dellit T., Duchin J., "interim guidelines for evaluation & management of community-associated methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin and soft tissue infections in outpatient settings." 2004. www.metrokc.gov/HEALTH/providers/epidemiology/MRSA-guidelines.pdf (30 Nov. 2005).