



MRSA and the Community

MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a potentially life-threatening antibiotic resistant Staph infection that is becoming increasingly common in community settings, like gyms, locker rooms, childcare centers and schools. In fact:

- MRSA affects more than 90,000 Americans every year.
- In the U.S., more deaths are linked to MRSA infections than to AIDS.
- In 2005, nearly 19,000 Americans died from MRSA infections.
- Almost 90 percent of physicians confirm that the prevalence of Community-Associated MRSA infections is increasing.

The spread of MRSA into community settings raises the need for education and information about practical ways to help reduce the spread of the infection.

The STOP MRSA Now Coalition – Standing Together to Help Prevent MRSA

To respond to the need for education, people across the country who experienced first-hand the threat of MRSA, along with MRSA experts, joined forces to launch *STOP MRSA Now*, a coalition committed to educating others about MRSA and helping reduce the spread of the infection in community settings.

Coalition members will take an active role in helping prevent the spread of MRSA by providing educational materials to their communities, distributing a national public service announcement and offering an opportunity for community members to have questions about MRSA answered online at www.stopmrsanow.org.

Seven time NBA All-Star, Grant Hill, who battled a MRSA infection, will join the coalition to help bring national awareness to the issue and highlight the importance of prevention, especially in community settings like locker rooms, gyms and schools.

STOPMRSANow.org and the STOP MRSA Now Playbook

STOP MRSA Now members will launch an online home for the coalition, where visitors can learn more about MRSA, read about members' personal experiences with MRSA and ask questions of experts.

The Web site will also offer the free, downloadable STOP MRSA Now Playbook. The Playbook provides in-depth information about MRSA, practical tips to help reduce the spread and setting-specific information for communities.

While more research is needed, the following five-point plan, among other critical tips and information, is offered in the STOP MRSA Now playbook.

- **Scrub up** – Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub sanitizer.
- **Wipe it down** – Use a disinfecting bleach solution to wipe down and disinfect hard surfaces. (1 tablespoon of disinfecting bleach diluted in 1 quart of water)
- **Cover your cuts** – Keep any nicks or wounds covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed.
- **Keep to yourself** – Do not share personal items, like towels or razors, that come into contact with bare skin.
- **Use a barrier** – Keep a towel or clothing between skin and shared equipment.

For more information, visit www.stopmrsanow.org