



FROM THE NURSE'S DESK,

At this time of year I wanted to make you all more aware of prevention and awareness about staph infections. Your child's health and safety are very important to us at BISD. Even though it is Fall, we still have the heat and mosquitos. Along with this we have LOTS of bug bites, which the kids like to scratch! There is a great deal of information in the media about staph infections in schools. In the interest of keeping BISD parents well informed, the following letter will provide information and suggestions regarding staph infections and how it can be prevented.

Staphylococcus aureus, or staph, is a common germ that many people carry in their nasal passages, under fingernails or on their skin with no ill effects. Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is a type of staph that has developed antibiotic resistance (certain antibiotics are unable to kill the bacteria). Since staph is spread primarily by direct (skin-to-skin) human contact or with direct contact-to-wound drainage of someone who is carrying or infected with the bacteria, anyone with a break in his or her skin is at risk. MRSA may also occur, less frequently, through indirect contact with contaminated surfaces or items. MRSA is NOT spread through the air. Many times the students have bug bites which get infected through scratching their sores on arms or legs, due to improper hand washing. Staph infections begin abruptly. Symptoms may include a large area of redness on the skin, swelling and pain, followed by a pustule, abscess or boils and carbuncles (red, lumpy sores filled with pus). **MRSA infections are often misdiagnosed as spider bites.**

Students and their family members should take the following precautions to help prevent skin infections:

- **The best defense is frequent hand washing with soap and warm water.**
- **Encourage students to keep their fingernails clean and clipped short.**
- **Avoid contact with other people's wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.**
- **Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, deodorant, or soap that directly touch the body.**
- **Clean and disinfect objects (such as gym and sports equipment) before use.**
- **Wash dirty clothes, linens, and towels, with hot water and laundry detergent. Using a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria.**
- **Encourage students who participate in contact sports to shower immediately after each practice, game or match with soap and water.**
- **Keep open or draining sores and lesions clean and covered. Anyone assisting with wound care should wear gloves and wash their hands with soap and water after dressing changes.**
- **Take prescribed medications until gone, even if symptoms are gone. If wound does not appear to be healing, call your doctor.**

We encourage you to be vigilant in looking for signs and symptoms of staph infections. If you or any family member exhibit symptoms as described above, you are encouraged to contact your family doctor. It is very important that the physician culture any wounds so that a correct diagnosis can be made. In the event you are diagnosed with a staph infection, please be sure you notify the Nurse or school immediately. If you are an athlete, it is extremely important you notify your coach of any wound/ infection as well as the Nurse. **Staph infections are very contagious and need to be treated promptly.**

Additional information about staph and MRSA can be found on their website at www.mrsaTexas.org

Sincerely,
Nicole Folmar, RN

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