

You may have heard or seen the recent media coverage concerning MRSA or Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus infections occurring in school-aged children. We would like to take this opportunity to inform you about what Sterling Public Schools is doing to help prevent and control the spread of this and other infections. Also included is general information on MRSA and what you can do.

Most infections caused by staph are skin infections such as pimples or boils. If the skin infection becomes red, painful, swollen or has drainage; they need to be seen and treated by a healthcare provider. A persistent wound or sore that does not heal should also be seen by a healthcare provider. Wounds must be covered with a clean, dry dressing. Staph is spread by contaminated hands, objects, surfaces, or skin lesions.

To prevent staph infections, you need to keep hands clean using soap and water or hand sanitizers, keep cuts and scrapes covered with a dressing until healed, avoid sharing personal items, and avoid contact with other person's wounds or dressings.

Sterling Public Schools has in place many tools to help prevent MRSA and other infections from spreading. Hand sanitizers are being made available in every classroom in the district, as well as in high traffic areas. Special cleaning considerations are made to high touch surfaces, restrooms, hallways, and equipment. Sterling Schools staff and coaches are being given additional MRSA information. Student athletes are also being instructed as to specific precautions they must take. The most important measure to remember is for all to practice "good hand washing."

If you or your healthcare provider has any further questions or concerns, contact Whiteside County Health Department-Infection Control at 815-626-2230 ext. 332.

More information is available on the following link:

<http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/hb/hbmrsa.htm>