



The Monthly InStAllment



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UHS Health Promotion Office, 110 Anderson Tower, 273-5775

MRSA

What is MRSA?

Although MRSA has recently been a hot media topic, it's been a health concern for years. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, is a type of bacteria that causes "staph" infections which resist treatment with usual antibiotics. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) with staph.

Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently in hospital and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes), and among people with weak immune systems. The incidence, though, has been increasing in the general public. Factors associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts and abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene.

How would I know if I had a MRSA or other staph infection?

Most of these infections are minor, appearing as small red bumps resembling a pimple or boil, and can be treated with drainage and/or antibiotics. Without treatment, however, they can progress to painful abscesses with pus and may lead to serious infections (such as surgical wound or bloodstream infections, and pneumonia). If you have a skin sore that concerns you, you should have it examined by your health care provider. You can make an appointment at UHS by calling 275-2662.

How can I avoid a MRSA infection?

Practice good hygiene! Staph bacteria, including MRSA, is usually spread via direct skin to skin contact, and potentially through contaminated objects.

- **Keep hands clean.** Wash thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Cover your wounds.** Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- **Keep personal items personal.** Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, or razors.
- **Wipe it down.** Wipe surfaces of sports equipment before and after use.



For More Information:
Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/mrsa
Mayo Foundation: www.mayoclinic.com

PROTECT YOURSELF



The Flu

What causes the flu?

The flu, caused by influenza viruses, is spread from person to person via coughing or sneezing, or by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose.

About 5% to 20% of the U.S. population gets the flu every year. College students are at risk, given the close living quarters and classrooms. Most healthy adults can infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 days **after** becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else **before you know you are sick**, as well as while you are sick.

How would I know I had the flu?

One thing that sets the flu apart from other illnesses is that the symptoms usually come on very suddenly. Flu symptoms include fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Nausea, vomiting, & diarrhea symptoms are more common in young children. With the flu, you will feel L-O-U-S-Y and may miss many classes.

How can I prevent getting the flu?

- **Get vaccinated!** The single best way to protect against the flu is to get the flu vaccine each year. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body. (See below for UHS Flu Vaccine Clinics.)
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** If you are sick, stay home from work and school to help protect others. Cover your cough!
- **Wash your hands often.** Use soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces for 20 seconds. (To time yourself, sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** If you shake hands with someone, wash your hands afterwards.
- **Practice other good health habits.** Get an adequate amount of sleep, exercise (walking or other exercise), manage your stress, eat nutritious food, and drink plenty of fluids (not including alcohol).

Gimme the flu vaccine



UHS Flu Clinics

Wednesday, Nov. 7:	11:00-1:30 - Caminsky Lounge, Eastman School
Monday, Nov. 12	1:00-3:00 - Bridge Lounge, WC
Wednesday, Nov. 28:	11:00-1:00- Green Lounge, Hutchison Hall

Call 585-275-2662 to schedule an appointment at UHS.

www.rochester.edu/uhs