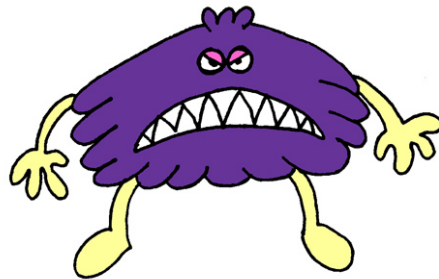


## ***MRSA “SUPERBUG”***

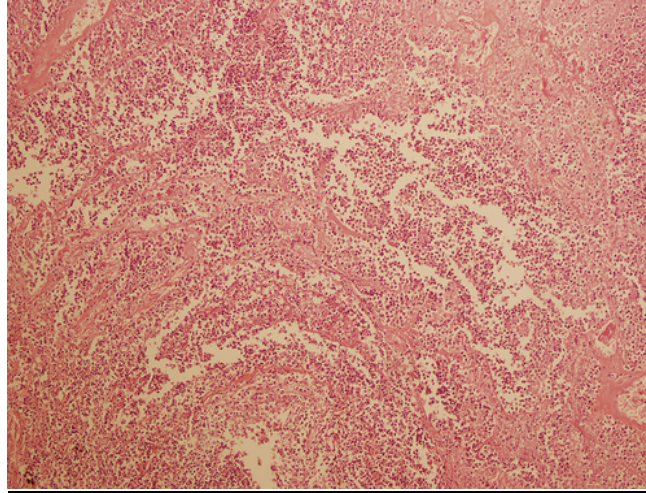


### **What is “staph”?**

Staphylococcus aureus, or staph, is a very common bacteria found on the skin and in the nose of many healthy people. Sometimes it causes skin infections, usually minor infections like pimples and boils; it can cause serious infections like surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections and pneumonia.

### **What is MRSA?**

Some staphs are resistant to antibiotics. Many years ago, penicillin was used to treat staph infections. Over time, the bacteria became resistant to penicillin and a newer type of antibiotic, a beta-lactam, like Methicillin, was found in 1959 to be effective against this mutated bacteria. Now the bacteria has become resistant to this antibiotic group and has been called “Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus”, or MRSA. It has been dubbed a “superbug” because it is hard to treat.



**#63 Staph aureus pneumonia medium power**

### **What are HA-MRSA and CA-MRSA?**

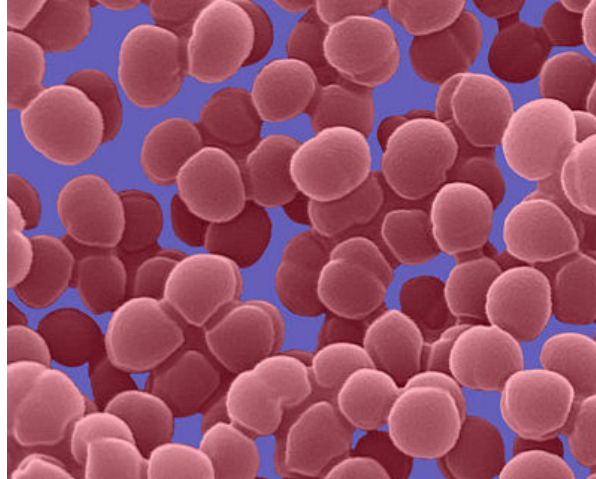
Initially almost all the cases of MRSA were found in hospitals and among health-care workers. Since we are now finding new cases unrelated to hospitals in communities now, the bacteria have been called Hospital-Acquired (HA-MRSA) or Community-Acquired (CA-MRSA). The hospital-acquired strain is resistant to the great majority of antibiotics whereas the community-acquired strain can still be treated with several drugs.

### **How does a MRSA infection look?**

Usually it appears as a skin infection, such as a pimple or boil, and it may be red, swollen, painful, and drain pus. It can cause life threatening systemic infections like pneumonia and bloodstream infections.

### **Who is at highest risk?**

Unfortunately anyone in a hospital is at risk because of its frequent occurrence there; additionally people with weakened immune systems, like patients in hospitals, nursing homes, or dialysis centers are at increased risk. In the community, young children are at risk because of their frequent cuts and scrapes; additionally athletes participating in contact sports, prisoners, military recruits, gay men, and Native Americans and Eskimos are all at a higher risk.



### What can be done to minimize the risk?

- a. Stay out of hospitals and away from healthcare workers
- b. Wash your hands frequently
- c. Keep cuts and scrapes covered
- d. Don't share towels and razors
- e. Sanitize linens in hot water and bleach
- f. See your doctor and ask about MRSA if you have a bad skin infection

### References:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)  
Mayo Clinic  
Web MD  
Up to date