

WINNIE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
PATIENT INFORMATION: STAPH INFECTIONS

WHAT IS STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS?

Commonly call STAPH, this is a normal bacteria carried on the skin or in the noses of healthy people.

WHAT CAUSES A STAPH INFECTION?

When this bacteria gets introduced into an area of the body where it does not normally live, like inside an open wound, a break in the skin, or the blood stream it may develop an infection. Staph infections, bacteria, and germs are spread from person to person most commonly by the hands.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A STAPH INFECTION?

Fever, and /or redness of a wound with swelling, pain, pus drainage or red streaking are all signs of a skin or wound infection. Many staph infections may first appear as a boil, abscess, pimple, or some type of insect bite.

CAN A STAPH INFECTION BE TREATED?

Yes! There are many antibiotics, which can treat a staph infection. However, over the years many new and more difficult to treat staph bacteria have developed. This has occurred because many people do not completely finish antibiotic prescriptions; share left over antibiotics, and save portions of prescriptions for other illnesses or infections.

WHAT DO I DO IF I DEVELOP A STAPH INFECTION?

See your doctor for a proper diagnosis of your condition. A laboratory sample may be taken from a wound, boil/abscess, nose swab, or blood sample, if necessary. Your doctor will prescribe the appropriate antibiotics and ointments needed for your specific infection or condition. **FINISH YOUR ENTIRE PRESCRIPTION AS DIRECTED!!!** And, don't forget to follow up with your doctor when directed to ensure your infection has completely healed to prevent re-infection of yourself or others.

HOW DO I PREVENT GETTING A STAPH INFECTION?

Healthy people without open wounds, skin diseases, diabetes or other complicating illnesses are not likely to get staph infections.

1. **HANDWASHING!!!!** The most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria. Wash your hands regularly with soap (preferably antibacterial soap) and water and bathe daily.
2. Keep cuts and abrasions clean and covered with the proper bandage until healed. Place dirty bandages and gauze in a trash bag away from clean areas of the home and dispose of properly.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or contaminated bandages and items. Take care to wash soiled clothing or linen separately with hot water and a small bit of bleach if possible.
4. Clean and disinfect contaminated items, furniture and materials well.