

School season can mean prime time for catching a cold or the flu. Here are some facts on preventing common infections, and how to treat them if necessary.



Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102° F in infants and small children	Usually 102° F, but can go up to 104° F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days
Headache	Rare	Sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle Aches	Mild	Usual, and often severe
Tiredness and Weakness	Mild	Often extreme, and can last two or more weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Sudden onset and can be severe
Runny Nose	Often	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Mild hacking cough	Usual, and can become severe

\*Frequent and thorough hand washing is the single best way to prevent colds, the flu, MRSA and other transferable infections. How do you know if you've washed long enough? Sing Happy Birthday twice! For times in between, use antibacterial hand sanitizer.

### PREVENTION/ MANAGEMENT:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with alcohol hand sanitizers whenever you have the cold or the flu.
- Get a flu shot.
- If you have the flu, stay at home until you have no temperature (see the doctor if needed).
- For both cold and flu, try to cover your coughs and keep a distance between you and other people.
- For both the cold and flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids.

# MRSA

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (pronounced Mer-Sa)



### FACT

- Bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose (present in 25 to 30 percent of the healthy population but not causing an infection).
- Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States.
- MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or by using items or surfaces that have been used by someone else with the infection (towels, used bandages, athletic equipment).
- In most cases, it is not necessary to close schools because of a student's MRSA infection. It is important to note that spreading MRSA can be prevented by simple measures such as washing your hands and keeping infected wounds clean and bandaged until healed.

### SYMPTOMS (MINOR TO SERIOUS)

- Skin redness and swelling
- "Pimple-like" red bumps
- Boils
- Rash
- Fever
- Headache
- A general sick or tired feeling



### PREVENTION

- **To prevent MRSA infection:** Practice good hand/body hygiene: Keep your hands clean by washing them with soap and water when they are visibly soiled, or by using alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Also, shower immediately after participating in exercise.
- Avoid sharing personal items (towels, razors, shirts) that come in contact with your bare skin. Use a barrier, such as clothing or a towel, between your skin and shared equipment (such as weight training benches).
- Cover skin cuts or scrapes with a clean bandage until they heal.
- Maintain clean equipment and clothing by frequently washing your sports/exercise clothes, and wiping equipment and surfaces that come into direct contact with other people.
- Factors that help MRSA transmission are referred to as the 5 Cs: Crowding, frequent skin-to-skin Contact, Compromised skin (cuts or scrapes), Contaminated items or surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness.

### TREATMENT

- Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated effectively by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics by a health care professional. However, staph bacteria also can cause serious infections (such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections and pneumonia).

Web sites: [www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.henryford.com](http://www.henryford.com) (Health Encyclopedia section)

# Safety Tips for Students

## INJURY PREVENTION

Injury is the leading cause of death for all people between the ages of 1 and 44 (CDC, 2004). Most often, these injuries don't have to happen. There are ways to keep yourself safe by becoming aware of the dangers that can cause injuries.



### Before & After School

www.henryford.com

#### Facts/Tips for Parents & Teachers

##### **Pedestrian**

- Nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of all children between the ages of 5 and 9 who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians.
- Children are at increased risk for pedestrian injury because:
  1. they are smaller in size and difficult to see
  2. they often misjudge whether it is safe to cross the street

##### **School Buses**

- School buses are one of the safest means of travel.
- On school buses, most injuries occur when entering or leaving the bus.

##### **Motor Vehicles**

- Car crashes are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the U.S.
- Nearly half of all children killed in car crashes are not wearing safety belts, and those who survive suffer from more severe injuries.
- One in 10 teens report driving after drinking alcohol.
- Have a written parent/teen agreement stating all the rules for driving and consequences for breaking the rules (limit passengers, set curfews, require safety belt use, etc.).
- Children 12 years of age and younger should always ride in the back seat wearing a safety belt.

##### **Internet/Social Media**

- Popular Internet sites such as Facebook and MySpace make it easier for teens to post and share personal information, pictures and videos, allowing online criminals to target them.
- Computers should only be used in an open area of the home; use should be monitored, especially at night.

### At School

##### **Violence**

- Violence is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 24.
- Youth violence starts early and continues into later years. Bullying is a form of violence that often occurs at school and is not always noticed.
- Among the students who committed a school-associated homicide, 20 percent were known to have been victims of bullying and 12 percent were known to have expressed suicidal thoughts or engage in suicidal behavior.

#### Tips for Students

- Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than age 10. Use crosswalks when available.
- Always try to walk on paths or sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk facing traffic.
- Look both ways for danger before and while crossing the street.
- Learn and obey all school bus safety rules.
- Wait for buses away from the street in safe areas such as a bus shelter or sidewalk.
- Wait for the bus driver to signal you that it is alright to cross the road.
- Make arrangements for a safe ride home before going out with friends where drinking alcohol may occur.
- Don't give out your name, address, phone number or other personal information to strangers on the Internet.
- If you notice odd or inappropriate behavior, notify a parent or guardian.



### At School

- Get involved with positive activities that keep you away from violence.
- Talk to an adult you can trust about situations that make you feel bad.
- Never get into the middle of a violent situation - get help from an adult.
- Take threats seriously. Tell a trusted adult when you've learned of a threat to anyone at school.