

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN  
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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## VRSA

(Vancomycin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*)

### What are VRSA?

Vancomycin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* ("staph") are a specific type of staph bacteria that are resistant to the antimicrobial agent vancomycin, a commonly used medicine in the treatment of staph infection. Staph are commonly found on the skin and in the noses of healthy people. VRSA infections are extremely rare.

### Who can get VRSA infections?

Persons who have developed VRSA infections in the past had several underlying health conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease. Persons with previous methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections, tubes going into their bodies (such as IV catheters), recent hospitalizations, and recent exposure to vancomycin and other antimicrobials may also be at increased risk.

### What are the symptoms of VRSA infection?

The infection may look like a pimple or boil that can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

### How are VRSA spread?

VRSA can spread among people having close physical contact with infected patients or contaminated items like bandages. To avoid infection you should keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water and avoid contact with other people's wounds or material contaminated from wounds. If you visit a friend or family member who is infected with VRSA while they are hospitalized, follow the hospital's recommended precautions.

### How are VRSA treated?

If you think you may have a staph infection, see your healthcare provider. VRSA can be treated with several drugs approved by the FDA.

### How can VRSA be prevented?

Practice good hygiene:

- Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Do not touch other people's wounds or bandages.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors and sports equipment.

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## **HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:**

- use soap and running water
- rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- wash all surfaces, including:
  - backs of hands
  - wrists
  - between fingers
  - under fingernails
- rinse well
- dry hands with a paper towel
- turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands

**For more information on VRSA, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.**

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