

October 25, 2007

Dear LREI Community,

Many of you have read the reports in the news about MRSA, a methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. MRSA is a strain of bacteria that does not respond to the penicillin family of antibiotics although it is treatable with other types of antibiotics. Most drug-resistant staph cases are skin infections but of greater concern are the more severe, invasive infections.

A study in the October 17 edition of the Journal of The American Medical Association found that 85% of all invasive MRSA infections were associated with health care settings. However, recent news of cases of MRSA in some schools and gyms in other parts of the country has focused attention on this as a new health concern.

LREI is not one of the institutions considered at risk and there has never been a case of MRSA acquired at school.

We will be reinforcing the good hygiene practices that we have always taught our students at LREI. Every class in the Lower School has already had or will have a hand-washing lesson or review. The Middle School and the High School students will also have a review of good hygiene practices.

The CDC has published an excellent fact sheet that addresses some of the most frequently asked questions about MRSA. You can access this at:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca\\_public.html#4](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html#4).

Here are guidelines from the CDC fact sheet for preventing staph or MRSA skin infections to be followed at school and at home:

❖ Practice good hygiene!

1. Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly *with soap* and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
5. Shared gym equipment should be wiped down before and after it is used.

❖ Contact your doctor if you think you may have a staph infection.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kitty Highstein RN- School Nurse for the Lower and Middle Schools  
Joanne Gouge RN- School Nurse for the High School