A Deadly Pathogen with Fewer and Fewer Treatment Options

Staphylococcus aureus, or staph, is a common bacterium that exists in our environment and our bodies. Most of the time it does no harm. Sometimes, however, it can cause infection and require treatment. MRSA refers to strains of S. aureus that are resistant to the antibiotic methicillin and a host of other drugs used to treat infection.

Vital Statistics

• MRSA is responsible for at least 11,000 U.S. deaths and 80,000 invasive infections per year.¹

• Patients with MRSA can be twice as likely to die as patients with staph infections that can be treated with methicillin.²

• Annual costs of treating hospitalized MRSA patients are between $3.2 billion and $4.2 billion in the United States.³

SEVERE INFECTIONS CAUSED BY MRSA⁴

HOSPITAL STAYS WITH MRSA INFECTIONS (1993–2005)⁵

Total number of discharges

MRSA is Becoming Resistant to a Growing Number of Antibiotics

MRSA is most commonly resistant to antibiotics used to treat conventional staph infections.\(^6\)

- Beta-lactams (penicillins and cephalosporins)
- Fluoroquinolones (e.g., levofloxacin)
- Macrolides (e.g., erythromycin, azithromycin)

MRSA can usually be treated with “last-resort” antibiotics, but some resistance has been reported to:\(^7\)

- Clindamycin\(^8,9\)
- Vancomycin\(^10\)
- Linezolid and daptomycin\(^10,11\) the last two novel drugs approved to treat drug-resistant S. aureus infections.

The information provided here is for general educational and informational purposes only. In no way should it be considered as offering medical advice, and it is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your healthcare provider to determine the appropriateness of the information for your own situation or if you have any questions regarding a medical condition or treatment plan.

Learn more and get involved at [WWW.PEWTRUSTS.ORG/ANTIBIOTICS.](http://WWW.PEWTRUSTS.ORG/ANTIBIOTICS.)

The Pew Health Group's Antibiotics and Innovation Project addresses the growing public health challenge of multidrug-resistant infections by supporting policies that stimulate and encourage the development of antibiotics to treat life-threatening illnesses.

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