



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at The Reschini Group

Many staph infections do not respond to penicillin or other related antibiotics like most other infections.

## PUBLIC HEALTH: STAPH INFECTIONS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), staphylococcus aureus, or staph, are bacteria healthy people can carry on the skin or in the nose that can cause common skin infections. Most of these infections are not life-threatening. However, if an infection becomes too severe and goes untreated, it can lead to serious and even deadly consequences.

### How Is the Disease Contracted?

Staph infections are contracted through skin-to-skin contact when the infected part of the body is touched.

They can also spread from person to person when sharing bed linens, towels, clothing or other items with an infected person.

### What Are the Symptoms?

The most common symptoms include:

- Tiny, white-headed pimples encompassed by red skin appearing on the base of hair follicles.
  - Usually occurs on the body where people shave or where skin is irritated from rubbing
- Swollen, red, painful lumps in the skin known as boils
  - Usually caused by an infected hair follicle
- Red bumps that turn into small blisters or pimples and eventually develop a honey-colored crust
  - Generally affects young children
- Redness, warmth and swelling under the skin accompanied by feeling feverish
  - Red, painful infection in the eyelid known as a stye

### How Are Staph Infections Treated?

Since staph infections are often painful, uncomfortable and unsightly, it's best to treat them immediately once they appear. To do so:

- Soak the infected skin in warm water or apply a moist washcloth, hot water bottle or heating pad to the area for 20 minutes three or four times a day.
- Take a pain reliever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Place a warm compress over a closed eye three or four times a day to relieve a stye.
- Avoid shaving if the infection occurs where you normally shave.
  - If you must shave, use a disposable razor and throw it away after each use.

If the infection does not go away after several days of trying a home remedy or it becomes increasingly more painful or you develop a fever, seek professional medical attention.

### How Are Staph Infections Prevented?

The best way to protect against a staph infection is to practice good hygiene by washing your hands regularly and bathing daily. Also, keep injuries such as cuts, rashes and scrapes clean and covered to prevent infection.

Also, if you or someone you know has a staph infection, do not share towels, sheets, sporting equipment or clothing with them until the infection is fully treated.

If you develop a staph infection, avoid touching the infected skin to prevent spreading it to other parts of the body. Also, launder any towels that come in contact with the infection in hot water before using them again.

