

Staph Information for Parents

What is staph?: Staphylococcus (staph) is a bacterium that can live on the skin and in the nose. In fact, nearly 32.4 % of Americans carry this bacterium, but not all show symptoms of illness (Cooke & Brown, 2010). People can have these bacteria present in/on their bodies, even if they have not recently been in the hospital. Many times, people can get rid of these bacteria by taking antibiotics. However, some individuals will carry this bacterium throughout their entire lives, and they may experience reoccurring skin infections at random times throughout their lives.

What does it look like?: Staph skin infections tend to look like spider bites or sores (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, 2006). They are often painful, swollen, and red. All parts of the body can be infected, but this bacterium can only be diagnosed by a physician.

Is this bacterium contagious?: Staph of the skin is extremely contagious, and it can be passed to family members, friends, and even pets. An individual who touches an infected person, or who touches the same objects an infected person touches, has a chance of obtaining this illness (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, 2006).

How did my child become infected?: A person can get infected with this bacterium by touching any object that contains staph bacteria. These bacteria can live on an object's surface for up to many months, but can be killed by proper cleaning techniques (listed below).

How can we prevent the spread of staph?: There are many ways to prevent this infection from spreading to others. Certain hygiene and health procedures, adapted from a public health brochure, must be followed carefully. Some of these procedures are listed below:

- Infected children should wash their hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- Children should bathe with soap and warm water every single day
- Those infected should not use the same towels as other members of the household
- Children with staph should not wear the same clothing items for more than 1 day
- Bedding should be washed every single week with warm water and bleach, if possible
- Counter tops, light switches, phones, door knobs, etc. should be cleaned weekly with disinfectants
- Infected children should not share drinks, eating utensils, or oral hygiene products with others
- Skin infections should be covered with a band aid at all times, in order to prevent spread of bacteria to others

These are just a few quick tips that will help prevent staph. However, if you would like more information about staph infections and their care, please visit the following websites:

Minnesota Department of Health. (2010, November 17). *Care of a staphylococcus aureus infection*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/staph/care.html>
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. (2006, March). *Living with MRSA*. Retrieved from <http://www.tpchd.org/files/library/2357adf2a147d1aa.pdf>



Germies

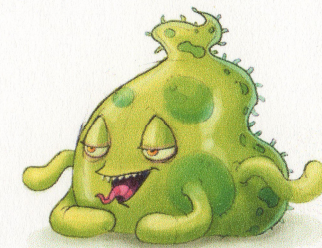
"Staphylococcus Education for Children & their Parents"

Purpose: This game hopes to educate children (ages 4-8 years) about how to live out their daily lives while infected with the bacteria staphylococcus aureus (staph). Research has shown that children learn information best through play, but they need reinforcement and clarification from the adults in their lives. This game promotes conversation, relationship, and play between children and their parents/guardians, while learning about daily life with staph.

The creators of this game believe that parents/guardians know their children best, and that they should be the ones to decide how much or how little their child needs to know about the actual disease mechanisms. Staph education information has been provided so that parents/guardians can best decide how to explain staph to their children. Some parents may explain this illness as a type of germ that creates boo boos, while others may choose to explain in more detail. No matter what amount of detail you choose to provide, this game will be beneficial when teaching your child how to prevent their own reinfection and prevent the infection of others.

Game Components:

- 1 game board
- 1 die
- "Happy Face" cards
- "Sad Face" cards
- Information cards
- 4 character pieces



Instructions For Play: After gathering up to 4 players, including **at least** one adult, the first player rolls the die and moves forward the rolled number of spaces. If the player lands on a space that contains any of these images:



The player will pick up a "happy face" card and read the scenario. These cards will help the child and parent learn the types of behaviors the child will need to adopt in order to prevent the spread of staph. The player will then follow the card, either moving 1 or 2 spaces ahead.



The player will pick up a "sad face" card and read the scenario. These cards will help the child and parents learn which types of behaviors are unacceptable when the child is infected with staph. The player will then follow the card, either moving 1 or 2 spaces backwards.



The player will pick a card with a "magnifying glass." An interesting fact about staph will be provided. This card promotes discussion between adult and child, while allowing the child to ask questions if necessary.

Players progress until the first player wins, by progressing all the way to the "end" space on the board.