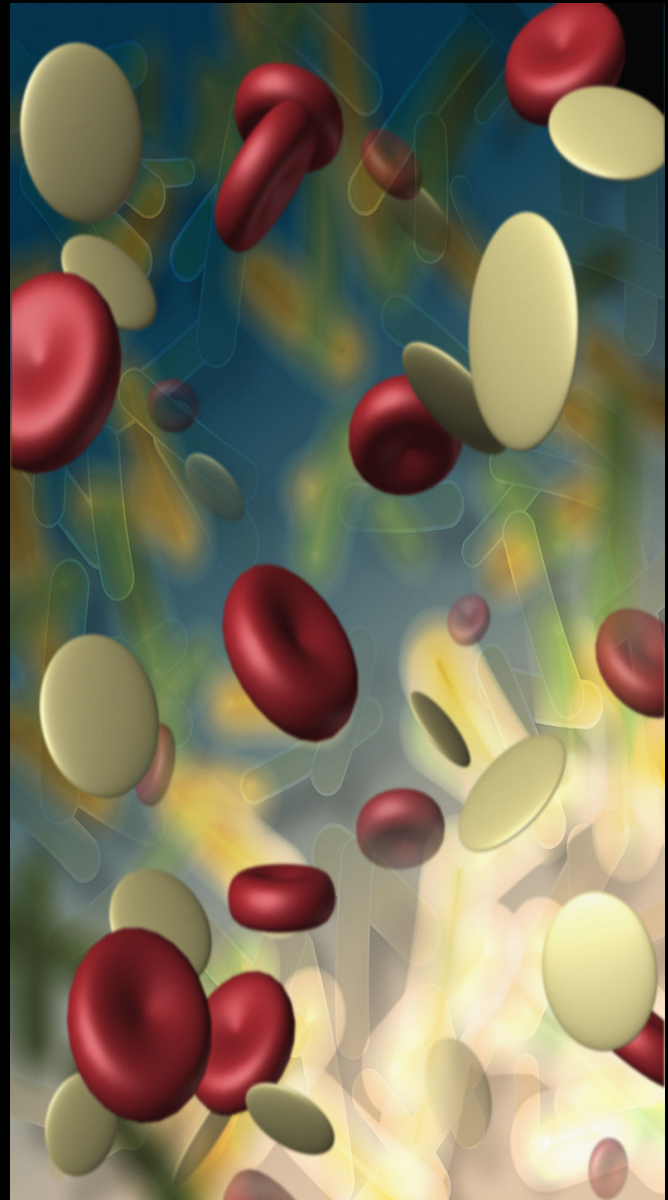


# Staph Infections & the MRSA Strand:

*Don't be scared.*

*Be informed.*

- Recently, doctors in Texas have been seeing an increasing number of patients with skin infections caused by *Staphylococcus aureus* (“Staph”) bacteria that are resistant to many antibiotics (drugs that kill bacteria), also called Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*—“MRSA.”
- The MRSA strand has also been given quite a bit of recent media attention.



## **“Staph 101”:** *This is nothing new...*

- Staph bacteria are commonly found in the nasal passages, under the fingernails and on the skin of healthy persons. Not everyone becomes infected.
- Staph/MRSA infections often begin with an injury to the skin.
- NOT all staph infections are the MRSA type, and with early identification and proper care, MRSA infections can usually be successfully treated.

# What does staph look like?

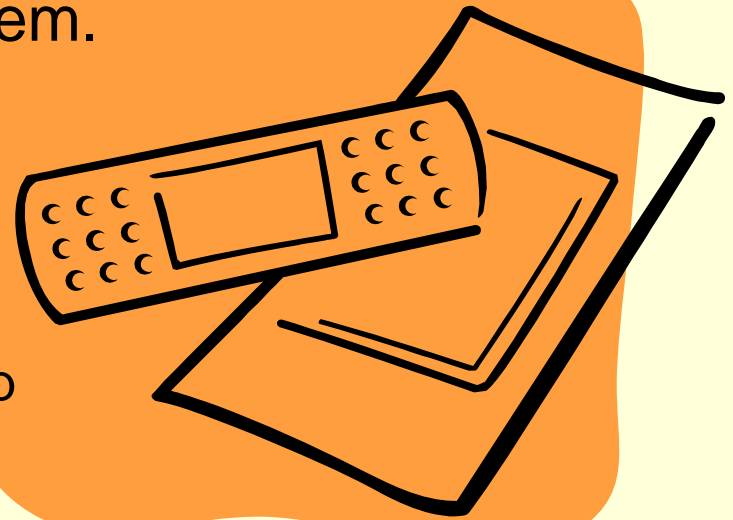
- It can be a pimple, rash, boil, or an open wound.
- Staph/MRSA is often misdiagnosed as a spider bite or an ingrown hair.
- Symptoms of a staph infection include redness, warmth, swelling, tenderness of the skin, and boils or blisters.
- If left untreated, staph can cause serious skin infections or worse.

# How do staph infections spread?

- Staph/MRSA lives on skin and survives on objects for 24 hours or more.
- The cleanest person can get a staph/MRSA infection. Antibiotic-resistant staph/MRSA skin infections are found in places where there are crowds of people (schools, jails, gyms). Staph/MRSA can rub off the skin of an infected person onto the skin of another person during skin-to-skin contact.
- Or, the staph can come off of the infected skin of a person onto a shared object or surface, and get onto the skin of the next person who uses it.
  - Examples of commonly shared objects include towels, soap, benches, and athletic equipment— in other words, anything that could have touched the skin of a staph-infected person can carry the bacteria to the skin of another person.

## How can I prevent myself or my family members from getting infected?

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water often.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean with soap and water and keep them covered.
- Avoid skin contact and sharing personal items with anyone you suspect could have a staph skin infection.
- When using protective gloves to treat infected areas, remove and dispose of properly; wash your hands with soap and water after removing them.
- Do not share personal items with
- other persons who might have
- skin infections.
  - Personal items include such things
  - as razors, towels, deodorant, or soap
  - that directly touches the body.



# What should I do if I think I have a skin infection?

- If you think that you have a skin infection, consult your doctor or healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- It is okay to check with a coach or the school nurse first. They have all been trained to identify the symptoms.
- Early treatment can help prevent the infection from getting worse and prevent its spreading.
- Be sure to follow directions from your doctor or healthcare provider closely, even when you start to feel better. Not taking all of your pills leads to stronger, antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

## **If my doctor has diagnosed a Staph/MRSA skin infection, what can I do to keep others from getting infected?**

- Clean your bandages, your hands, and your home.
- Keep the infected area covered with clean, dry bandages. Pus from the infected wound is very infectious.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water, especially after changing your bandages or touching the infected skin.
- **Inform the school nurse**
  - so we can help you get well and
  - so we can protect everyone else on campus and prevent it from spreading!





# More prevention methods...

- Regularly clean/disinfect your bathroom, kitchen, and all other rooms, as well as your personal items.
- Wash clothes and other items that become soiled with hot water (160°F+) or bleach, when possible.
- Dry clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying. This also helps kill bacteria in clothes.
- Tell any healthcare providers who treat you that you have an antibiotic-resistant Staph/MRSA skin infection.
- Shower after you have engaged in physical activity causing you to sweat. Bacteria lives in sweat, and the longer it stays on your skin, the longer it has to grow and start an infection.
- **REMEMBER THIS: IF YOU DIDN'T SEE THE SPIDER—IT MAY NOT BE A SPIDER BITE! HAVE IT CHECKED BY A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL.**





**Warning:** The Following Slides  
are REAL Cases of Staph

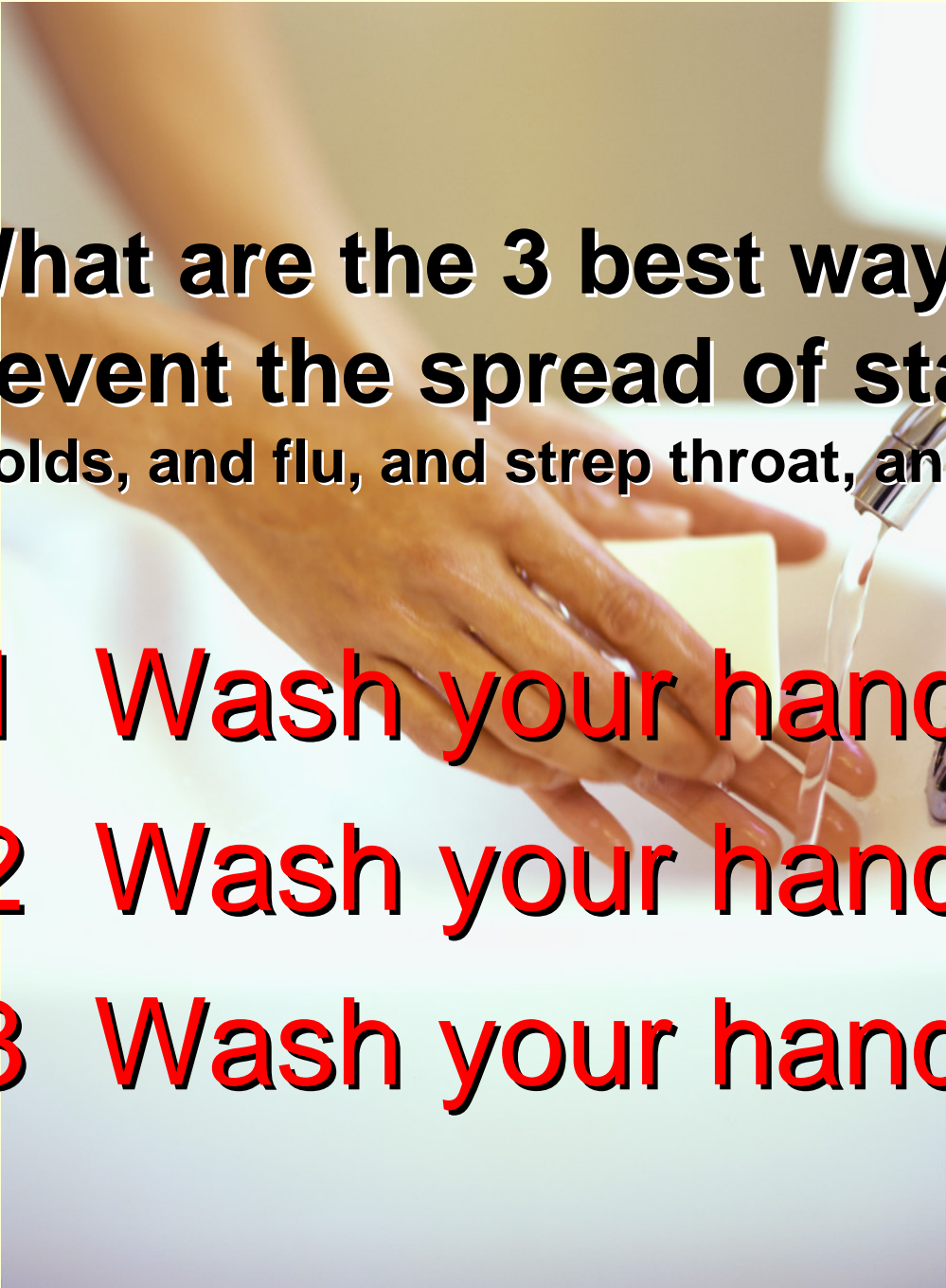
*Knowing how to identify staph is an  
important step towards prevention  
and allows for treatment  
to begin as soon as possible.*









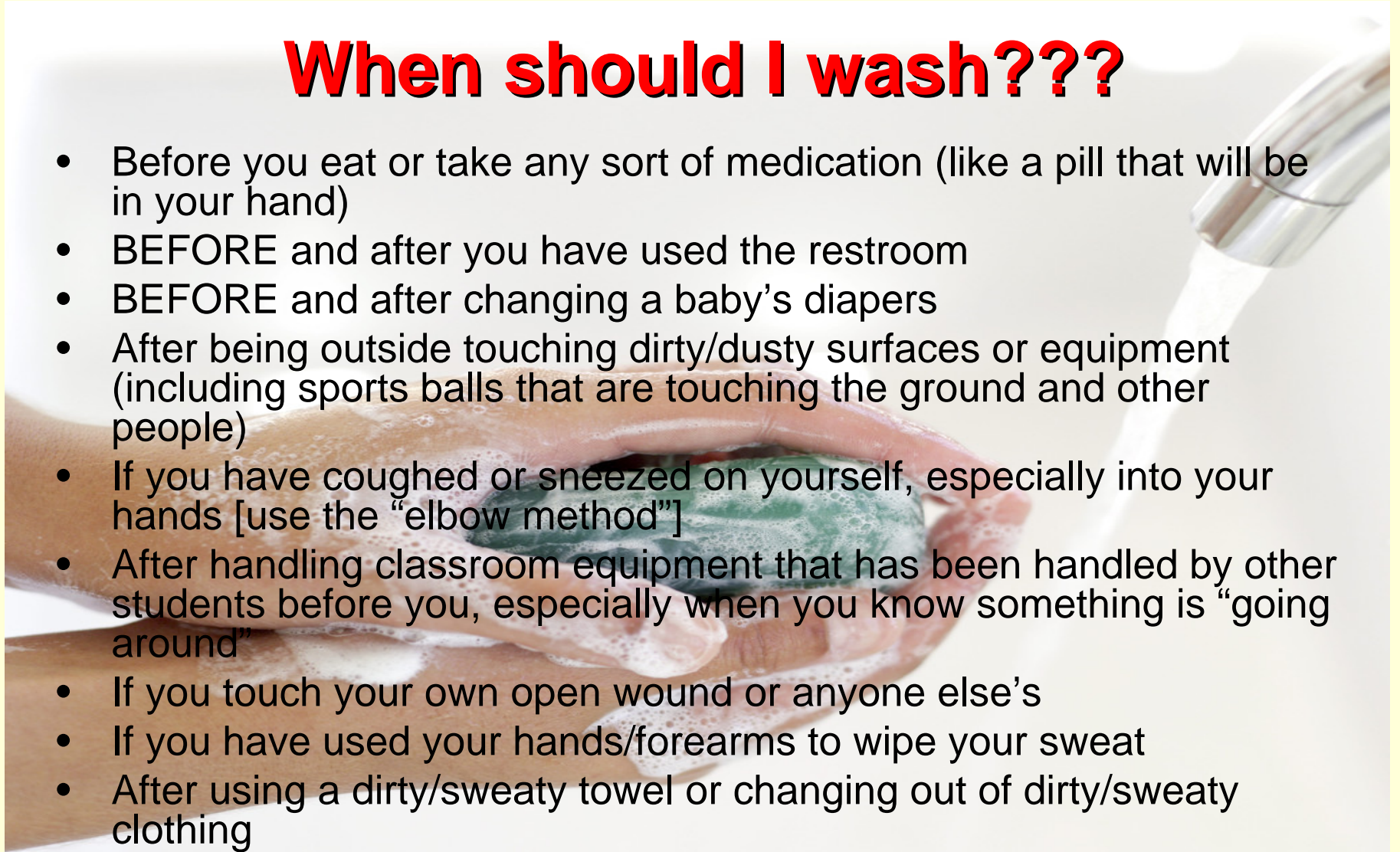


**What are the 3 best ways  
to prevent the spread of staph?**  
[and colds, and flu, and strep throat, and... 😊]

- **#1 Wash your hands.**
- **#2 Wash your hands.**
- **#3 Wash your hands.**

# When should I wash???

- Before you eat or take any sort of medication (like a pill that will be in your hand)
- BEFORE and after you have used the restroom
- BEFORE and after changing a baby's diapers
- After being outside touching dirty/dusty surfaces or equipment (including sports balls that are touching the ground and other people)
- If you have coughed or sneezed on yourself, especially into your hands [use the "elbow method"]
- After handling classroom equipment that has been handled by other students before you, especially when you know something is "going around"
- If you touch your own open wound or anyone else's
- If you have used your hands/forearms to wipe your sweat
- After using a dirty/sweaty towel or changing out of dirty/sweaty clothing
- After carrying/handling dirty laundry
- After handling livestock or playing with a pet
- Anytime you think your hands are dirty—better to wash too often than not often enough!





# What is DISD doing now to prevent the spread of staph?

- Cleaning/mopping daily all floors (classroom, hallway, cafeteria, locker room, and bathroom) with a bleach solution known to kill the bacteria
- Wiping down daily all water fountains, door knobs/handles, desktops and tabletops throughout the building and all weight room equipment (at DHS) with the same bleach solution
- Requiring students to empty their gym lockers every Friday so that locker rooms may be disinfected “top to bottom,” including inside the lockers
- Reminding students to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and regularly use the anti-bacterial hand sanitizer which can be found in all classrooms.
- Encouraging DHS and DMS P.E. students to take their clothes home weekly for washing (or more often if the parents would like).
- Educating students and staff of best personal hygiene practices as well as how to identify early signs of staph.

# What improvements are being implemented to further prevent outbreaks of staph?

- Cleaning/mopping the gym floor with the same bleach solution used on all other floors throughout the school
- Purchasing towels at DMS so that each athlete may have a fresh, clean towel daily for after practice clean-up
- Purchasing high capacity washers and dryers to handle the increased laundry in a timely manner
- Treating practice pads and helmets with bleach solution several times per week
- Installing additional soap dispensers in the sink and shower areas of the locker rooms
- Posting information signs and pictures throughout the school to remind students of the importance of regular hand-washing and how to prevent and identify staph infections.

- We want to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- Please do your part to keep yourself and the campus clean and prevent the spread of germs.
- If you find out you have a staph infection, please notify the school nurse immediately, and do not come back to school until you are under a doctor's care and have been cleared to return to campus.

  
*The End*  


*Some information taken from  
Texas Department of State  
Health Services Website*