

Commerce ISD

September 21, 2007

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As some of you are already aware, there have been some cases of staph infections in some of the high school athletes. There have also been a few cases at other campuses. Unfortunately, cases of staph infections are on the rise everywhere.

Staph bacteria, like other kinds of bacteria, normally live on your skin and in your nose, usually without causing problems. Staph bacteria only become a problem when they cause infection. All staph bacteria can be spread from one person to another through casual contact or through contaminated objects. It is commonly spread from the hands of someone who has staph. This could be anyone in the community. Staph used to infect people who had chronic illnesses, but now staph is becoming more common in healthy people. These infections can occur among people who are likely to have cuts or wounds and who have close contact with one another, such as members of sports teams.

If staph is causing an infection in a wound, that area of your skin may be red or tender. Staph commonly causes skin infections, such as boils, abscesses, or cellulitis. Often, people think they have been bitten by a spider or insect. Because staph infections can become serious in a short amount of time, it is important to see your doctor right away if you notice a boil or other skin problem.

I assure you Commerce ISD is doing everything possible to reduce the spreading of these bacteria. Along with the normal cleaning our custodians do, certain areas have been thoroughly cleaned with a cleaner that kills staph bacteria. The coaches have also taken extra steps by cleaning equipment.

You and your child can also take steps to protect yourselves from staph.

- Practice good hygiene.
- Keep your hands clean by washing them frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand-washing is the best way to avoid spreading germs.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage and avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Do not share personal items such as towels or razors.
- Be smart about using antibiotics. Know that antibiotics **can** help treat bacterial infections but they **cannot** cure viral infections. Always ask your doctor if antibiotics are the best treatment and avoid pressuring your doctor into prescribing antibiotics when they won't help you get better.
- Always take all your antibiotic medicine as prescribed by your doctor. Using only part of the medicine can cause antibiotic-resistant bacteria to develop.
- Do not save any antibiotics and do not use antibiotics that were prescribed for someone else.

I am always happy to answer any questions you might have. If I can help in any way please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Speulda, RN

Director of Health Services

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