

Community-Acquired Infections Fact Sheet

Q What are community-acquired infections?

A Community-acquired infections are acquired anywhere other than in a healthcare facility, in settings such as schools, exercise facilities, or any place you come in contact with other people or with surfaces that have been contaminated.

Q What are some of the most common community-acquired infections?

Staph & MRSA^{1,2,3}

What are Staph & MRSA?

A The group of bacteria known as Staph can cause many different diseases ranging from mild and requiring no treatment to severe and potentially deadly. Approximately 20-30% of healthy adults have Staph bacteria in their nose or on their skin. Only about 1% of the population carry MRSA bacteria.

Who is at risk for developing a Staph/MRSA infection?

Anyone can develop a Staph infection, although certain groups of people are at greater risk, including the elderly, newborn infants, breastfeeding women, and people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and lung disease.

How are Staph/MRSA infections treated?

Most Staph infections are treatable with antibiotics, but the strain known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is resistant to the more common antibiotics, including methicillin, and penicillin. MRSA can be hard to treat and can develop into life-threatening blood or bone infections because there are fewer effective antibiotics available for treatment.

How are Staph/MRSA bacteria transmitted?

Approximately 15% of Staph/MRSA infections are acquired in the community, when a person who is at risk touches a surface contaminated with Staph/MRSA bacteria or through skin-to-skin contact.



How long can the bacteria live on surfaces?

Staph/MRSA can survive for weeks to several months on almost all surfaces, including commonly used items such as doorknobs, keyboards, telephones, sports equipment, gym floors, etc.

How can the spread of Staph/MRSA bacteria be reduced?

Staph/MRSA can be killed by cleaning and disinfecting surfaces with bleach and other disinfectants, such as quaternary amines.

C. difficile (C. diff)4,5

What is C. difficile?

Clostridium difficile, commonly known as C. diff, is a bacterium that can cause diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions and occasionally death.

Who is at risk for developing a C. diff infection?

People in good health usually don't get C. diff disease. The elderly and those who have other illnesses or conditions that require extended use of antibiotics are at greater risk.

How is C. diff bacteria transmitted?

C. diff bacteria are found in human waste. People can become infected if they touch items or surfaces such as toilets, bathtubs, and shower seats that are contaminated with human waste and then touch their mouth or nose.

How are C. diff infections treated?

C. diff infections are generally treated for 10 days with antibiotics. The drugs are effective and appear to have few side effects.

How long can C. diff bacteria live on surfaces?

C. diff bacteria can live for years on environmental surfaces.

How can the spread of C. diff bacteria be reduced?

Proper hand washing, particularly after visiting the restroom, and regular cleaning of surfaces with disinfectants are critical in preventing the spread of C. diff.

Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE)6

What is Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci?

Enterococci are bacteria that are normally found in the human intestines and in the female genital tract and are often found in the environment.

These bacteria can sometimes cause urinary tract, bloodstream, and wound infections.

Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is often used to treat infections caused by enterococci. In some instances, enterococci have become resistant to this drug and thus are called vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE).



Who is at risk for developing a VRE infection?

People who:

- Have medical devices inserted such as urinary catheters or central intravenous catheters
- Have had surgical procedures, such as abdominal or chest surgery
- Have weakened immune systems

How is VRE bacteria transmitted?

VRE is usually passed to others by direct contact with human waste, urine or blood containing VRE.

How are VRE infections treated?

Most can be treated with antibiotics other than vancomycin.

How long can VRE bacteria live on surfaces?

VRE bacteria are very hardy and can live for several days on surfaces.

How can the spread of VRE bacteria be reduced?

By proper hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, and by frequent cleaning of surfaces that may become contaminated with VRE, followed by disinfecting with a bleach mixture.

Noroviruses^{7,8}

What are noroviruses?

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the "stomach flu". Noroviruses are found in human waste or the vomit of infected people.

Who is at risk for developing a norovirus infection?

Anyone can become infected with these viruses.

How are norovirus infections treated?

Currently, there is no medication that works against norovirus and there is no vaccine to prevent infection. Norovirus infection cannot be treated with antibiotics. This is because antibiotics work to fight bacteria and not viruses. Norovirus illness is usually brief in otherwise healthy people. When people are ill with vomiting and diarrhea, they should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

How are noroviruses transmitted?

People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus; touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth; and having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

People infected with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least three days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as two weeks after recovery. So, it's particularly important for people to practice good hand washing and other cleaning habits after they've recently recovered from norovirus illness.

How long can noroviruses live on surfaces?

Noroviruses can survive on virtually any hard surface for up to 12 hours.

How can the spread of noroviruses be reduced?

The chance of getting norovirus illness can be reduced by frequent hand washing, especially after restroom visits and before preparing or eating food, and by thoroughly disinfecting contaminated surfaces using a bleach-based cleaner.

The Kimberly-Clark **WETTASK* System** is the ideal tool for use in environmental disinfection, to help prevent the spread of community-acquired infections. The wipers are designed to be compatible with bleach and quaternary amine disinfectants.

Also, because the **WETTASK* System** is enclosed, there's less chance of the cross-contamination that can so easily occur with open systems. And it reduces exposure to chemical vapors and splashes.

The **WETTASK* System** is the only enclosed system that allows you to add your preferred disinfecting solution. You can prepare buckets ahead of time. And because they're portable, **WETTASK* System** buckets and canisters make it easy to spot-clean contaminated areas.



1http://www.medicinenet.com/staph_infection/article.htm

2http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html#8

3CDC. Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings 2007. http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_isolation.html

4http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_CdiffFAQ_general.html

5http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_VRE_publicFAQ.html

6<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus-qa.htm>



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