

UTCVM DERMATOLOGY SERVICE

# MRSP Skin Infections

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Your pet has been diagnosed with a methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* (MRSP) skin infection - previously known as *Staphylococcus intermedius* (MRSI). MRSP is not the same as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which affects humans. This information sheet is being given to you to supplement the information that has already been discussed with you by the dermatologist or dermatology technician.

## BASIC INFORMATION

*Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* is the most common species of bacteria found in dogs. Usually, this bacteria resides on the skin but does not cause any problems. However, some dogs develop a skin infection (pyoderma) that can usually be cleared with one of the common antibiotics. A small percentage of dogs may develop skin infections caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* (MRSP), which means that the more common antibiotics will not clear the infection. This bacteria is most common in pets with recurrent skin infections due to underlying causes such as allergies or endocrine diseases.

## PRECAUTIONS

*Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* causes infections in pets and only rarely causes infections in people. However, because this is a more resistant bacteria than the usual bacteria that infects pets, we want to decrease the chance of it being transmitted to you or your family. The most important thing that you can do is frequent handwashing after touching your pet and always before meals. If you or family members are immune compromised, you should either avoid direct contact with your pet or thoroughly wash your hands after handling. Remember, the risk of transmission to humans is very low. If, however, you develop a non-healing skin wound, please see your physician.

## TREATMENT

To treat MRSP in your pet, we are prescribing oral antibiotics and/or aggressive topical therapies. It is very important that you follow treatment instructions exactly as given to you so the infection will be cleared.

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## OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. How did my pet get MRSP?

Similar to human medicine, resistant bacteria are becoming more common in veterinary patients. We see this bacteria most often in patients with a history of recurrent skin infections and multiple previous short courses of antibiotic use. To prevent future infections, the dermatology service will work with you to identify and control the underlying cause (allergies, endocrine disease). We must control the underlying cause in order to reduce skin infection recurrence.

### 2. Can my other pets catch this bacteria?

Pets that live together share bacteria. Thus, other dogs or cats in the home may be colonized with MRSP. As long as the other animals have no underlying diseases that predispose them to skin infections, then the bacteria should not cause problems. If other pets develop skin lesions, then examination by your regular veterinarian and possible skin culture should be performed to determine if MRSP is the cause.