

Antibiotic-Resistant Bacterial Skin Infections

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Bacterial skin infections are a common malady of dogs. Every dog (actually every mammal) has a certain amount of bacteria on their skin that is considered normal. A normal amount of bacteria on the skin protects the skin from invasion by other bacteria in the environment.

While normal bacteria on the skin is generally beneficial, it also has the potential to become problematic.

If the skin becomes inflamed or if the immune system becomes compromised, the normal bacteria can overgrow and cause infection. This means that skin infections are almost always secondary to something else. It is important to determine why a dog has a skin infection. If the underlying cause is not identified, then the skin infection will be a recurrent problem.

Common causes of skin infections include, but are not limited to: allergies, hypothyroidism, Cushing's disease, fleas and mites.

While bacterial skin infections in dogs are not new, antibiotic-resistant bacterial skin infections are. Over the past decade antibiotic-resistant bacterial skin infections have become a common problem.

The most common bacteria to develop antibiotic-resistance are *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, also referred to as Staph. Antibiotic-resistant Staph is often referred to as methicillin-resistant Staph, MRSP or MRSA.

When dogs are treated with antibiotics repeatedly, their likelihood of developing antibiotic-resistant Staph increases.

It is problematic when a dog develops antibiotic-resistant Staph because there are fewer antibiotics available to treat this type of infection. In the worst cases, there are no antibiotics available at all, or the antibiotics that are available have the potential for severe side effects.

Another concern is the possibility of a Staph infection on a dog transferring to a human. The likelihood of a Staph infection on a dog affecting a human is extremely low, but it is within the realm of possibility.

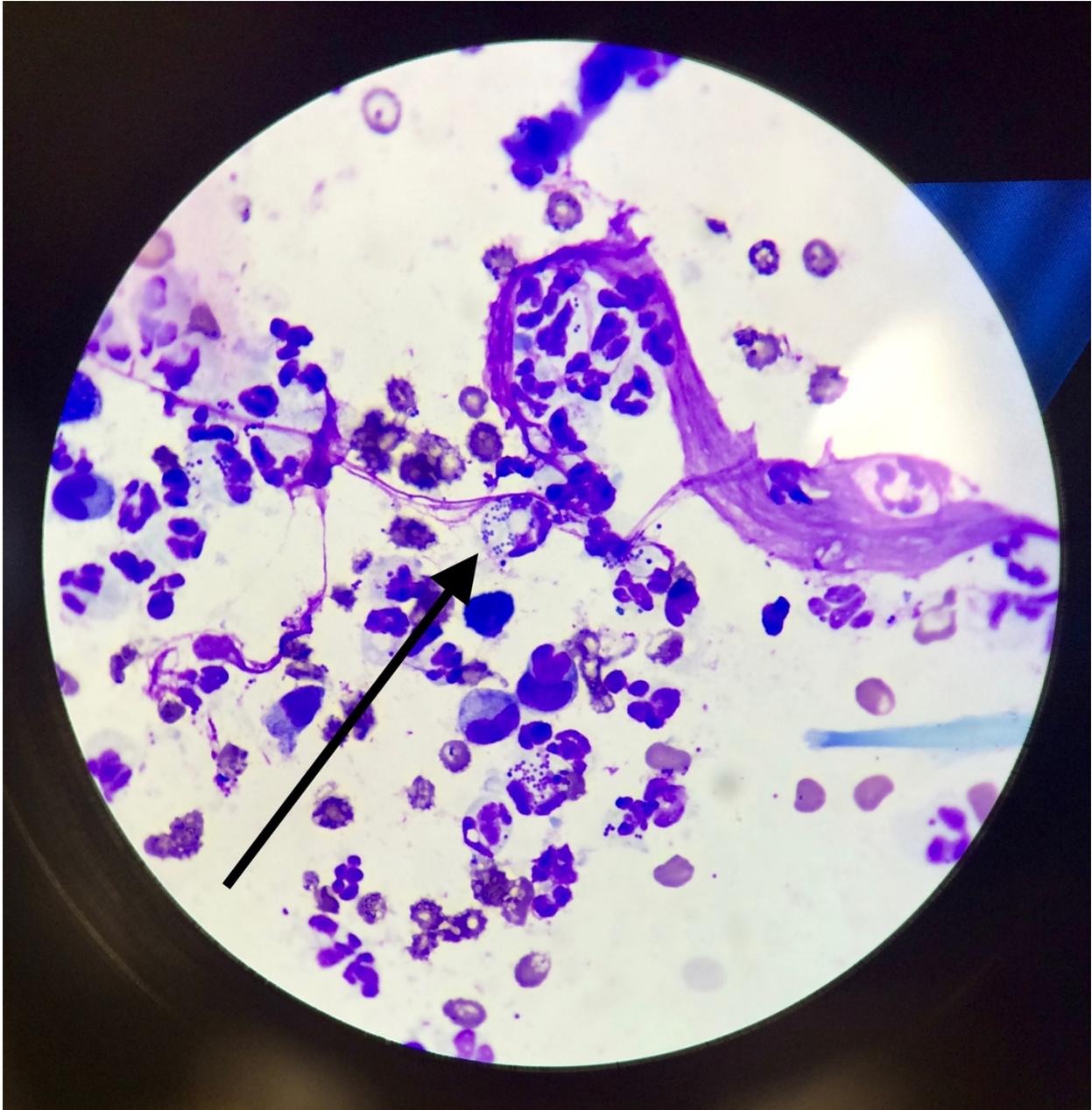
Factors that increase the chance of a human contracting a Staph infection from their dog:

- If the human has a compromised immune system
- If the human touches their dog's infected skin and does not wash their hands afterwards
- If the human has a sore on their skin that contacts the infected skin on their dog

What to do if your dog has a bacterial skin infection:

- Seek treatment for the infection and for the underlying cause
- Discuss special concerns with your veterinarian
- Bathe your dog
- Wash your hands

For even more information check out: www.wormsandgermsblog.com



Bacteria inside a white blood cell as seen through a microscope.