

# **MRSA**

**METHICILLIN RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS***

**GENERAL DISEASE FACT SHEET**

**PHOTO REFERENCE**

**INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES**

Athletic Directors, Trainers, Coaches, PE & Health Teachers

**STAY IN THE GAME**

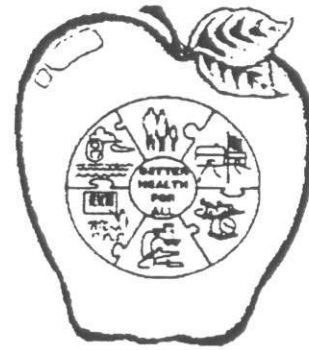
Flyer for Athletes

# SCHOOL NURSES NOTES

Summit County Health Department

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## Measures for preventing staphylococcal skin infections among sports participants

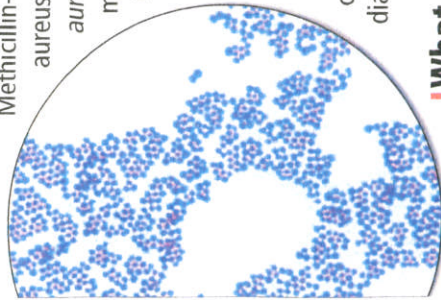
- **Cover all wounds. If a wound cannot be covered adequately, consider excluding players with potentially infectious skin lesions from practice or competitions until the lesions are healed or can be covered adequately.**
- **Encourage good hygiene, including showering and washing with soap after all practices and competitions.**
- **Ensure availability of adequate soap and hot water.**
- **Discourage sharing of towels and personal items (clothing or equipment)**
- **Establish routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment.**
- **Train athletes and coaches in first aid for wounds and recognition of wounds that are potentially infected.**
- **Encourage athletes to report skin lesions to coaches and encourage coaches to assess athletes regularly for skin lesions.**

## What is Staphylococcus aureus?

*Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*) is a bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nose of 20-30 percent of healthy individuals. This bacteria often causes skin infections, but can also cause other more serious infections, such as pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

## What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a strain of *S. aureus* that is resistant to methicillin, an antibiotic in the same class as penicillin. MRSA is traditionally seen in people recently hospitalized or who have been treated at a health care facility, such as a dialysis center.



## What is CA-MRSA?

Community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) infections are considered to be community-associated because they occur in people who have not been hospitalized or had a medical procedure, such as dialysis or surgery, within the past year.

CA-MRSA infections have been documented among athletes, prisoners, military recruits, day care attendees, injection drug users, and others who live in crowded settings or routinely share contaminated items.

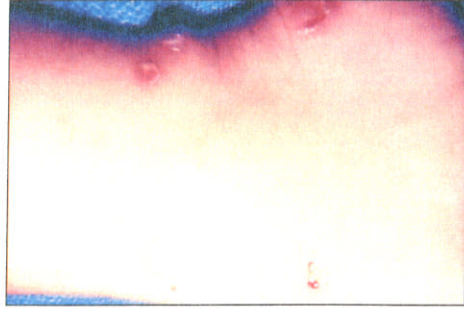
## What does a CA-MRSA skin infection look like?

A skin infection with CA-MRSA can begin as a reddened area on the skin, or resemble a pimple that can develop into a skin abscess or boil causing fever, pus, swelling or pain.

CA-MRSA skin

infections can be treated by a health care professional by incising, draining, and locally caring for the wound. Antibiotics may be administered as necessary. These infections can progress to a more serious and difficult-to-treat stage if not treated properly and promptly.

It is also possible for a pre-existing cut, turfburn or other irritated area on the skin to develop an infection with CA-MRSA if the area is not kept clean and dry.



Infection site: ankle  
May be mistaken for spider bites

## How can CA-MRSA skin infections be prevented on MY Team?

Both the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified CA-MRSA as a potential problem among athletes. The NCAA recommends practicing good personal hygiene and avoiding contact with infected areas to prevent the transmission of CA-MRSA.

### Role as an Educator

- Encourage athletes who participate in sports involving contact (football, wrestling, etc.) to shower with soap as soon as possible after practices and competitions.
- Athletes who share equipment are encouraged to regularly clean this equipment with commercial disinfectants or a solution of one tablespoon of bleach in one quart water.
- Encourage players not to share towels or other personal items such as uniforms or equipment.
- Educate players on the importance of wound care and hand hygiene.

### Role as an Administrator

- Ensure availability of adequate soap and hot water.
- Establish routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment, such as towels, uniforms, helmets, athletic equipment and mats.
- If a player has a wound that cannot be covered adequately, consider excluding the player from practice or competitions until the wound can be covered or has completely healed.

## How is CA-MRSA spread?

CA-MRSA is spread through person-to-person contact or contact with contaminated items such as towels, razors, uniforms and athletic equipment. Poor hygiene practices help facilitate the spread of the bacteria.



## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A SKIN INFECTION?

Some sores may get minor infections that will heal quickly. Common signs of skin infections include fever, pus, swelling, tenderness, or pain. Serious infections can also look like a pimple, blister or seeping sore and can occur anywhere on the body.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A SKIN INFECTION?

If you have any questions about any sore or injury, ask your parents, coach, and be evaluated by your family doctor.

### STAPH (OFFICIAL NAME *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS*)

- Most common cause of skin infections
- Can be found on healthy skin
- Most infections are minor (such as pimples and boils).
- Can also cause serious infections, like surgical wound infections and pneumonia
- Some staph has become resistant to various antibiotics.
- One type of these bacteria are called methicillin-resistant Staph.aureus, or MRSA.
- Most staph bacteria and MRSA are susceptible to several antibiotics.
- Staph and MRSA can spread through close contact with infected people.
- MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact, and not through the air.
- Spread may also occur by touching objects (towels, sports equipment).

# METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

## (MRSA)

### INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

Outbreaks involving staph skin infections are occurring across the country and have become more common within group settings. The spread of these infections requires close contact - skin to skin, or contact with a surface recently contaminated with drainage from an open lesion. Intact skin serves as a barrier to infection.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Basic infection control measures recommended by CDC to help prevent such outbreaks include:

- **GOOD HAND-WASHING** practices – this is the best line of defense
- Covering of open wounds
- Good general hygiene practices – including daily showers
- No sharing personal items
- Cleaning exercise and other shared equipment between uses
- Seeking medical attention for any reddened, painful, swollen or draining sores

Procedures should be in place to ensure frequent cleaning of commonly used equipment, especially in areas where skin to surface contact is common.

Ensure the surfaces of all commonly used areas are disinfected on a regular basis, particularly floors, sinks, and any other areas where bare skin touches the surface on a regular basis

Posting educational flyers addressing these issues is a good way to get the points across. Flyers discouraging the practice of tattooing should also be posted, as new tattoos create breaks in the skin through which the bacteria can enter. The dangers of tattooing should also be addressed during orientation.

## STAY IN THE GAME

AS AN ATHLETE, YOU MAY BE AT RISK FOR SERIOUS SKIN INFECTIONS. KNOW HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF.

### Protect your skin

- Keep scrapes, burns and wounds covered with waterproof bandages until completely healed.
- Don't use loofahs, netted sponges or other scrubbing items.
- Don't get any tattoos or piercings.

### Keep yourself clean

- Wash your hands often, including:  
BEFORE and AFTER practice  
AFTER using the restroom  
AFTER changing wound dressings
- When showering, wash sores last.
- Take clothes and towels home daily and wash in warm or hot water
- Shower immediately after training, practice sessions or a game.

### Avoid catching something

- Don't share:  
Razors  
Towels and washcloths  
Deodorant  
Bars of soap  
Towels during games or practice
- Don't use someone else's clothing, towels or equipment
- Wash your hands often and use hand sanitizers to kill germs



# SKIN INFECTIONS IN SCHOOLS

## PREVENTION TIPS FOR ATHLETES AND COACHES

- **Wash hands frequently!** Use soap and water before and after practice/competitions and, as always, after using the restroom
- Avoid use of common whirlpools or swimming pools with open sores
- Do not share ice tubs.
- Shower after each practice or game.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors, clothing, soap, or deodorant.
- Take towels and clothes home daily to be washed
- Clean athletic equipment after use with a diluted-bleach solution or germicidal disinfectant. This includes wrestling mats, weight benches, work-out machines and personal sports gear, such as helmets.
- Thoroughly clean cuts, scrapes (such as "turf burns") or other sores with soap and water.
- Cover any lesion or wound with a dry, clean bandage. If infected area is unable to be covered, exclusion from contact sports until the wound is healed is recommended.
- Avoid close and prolonged contact with teammates and others who have skin lesions.

Remember: Prompt medical attention is essential for any suspicious wound or lesion of the skin. Antibiotics may not always be prescribed. Sometimes, incision and drainage is the only necessary treatment. It is important to follow the physician's instructions and keep him or her informed of any changes. As always, if antibiotics are prescribed, take them as prescribed and finish ALL doses.

### Information resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Questions and Answers about MRSA in Schools  
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>

New York State Department of Health - [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov)

Summit County Health Department - Communicable Disease Division @ 330-926-5787