

Student guide to prevent MRSA

What is Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to as “staph” are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of 20-30% of healthy people. This bacteria is a common cause of skin infections or cellulitis.

What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus is a strain of staph that is resistant to methicillin type antibiotics such as penicillin or amoxicillin. Traditionally antibiotic resistant staph was only seen in the health care setting.

What is CA-MRSA?

Community-associated MRSA infections occur in healthy individuals that have not been hospitalized or had a medical procedure within the last year.

What Does a CA-MRSA infection look like?

A skin infection with staph may begin as a reddened area of skin, or resemble a pimple that quickly develops into a skin abscess, or a boil causing fever, pus, swelling and or pain. Many individuals think they may have been bite by a spider or have a preexisting cut, turf-burn or other types of abrasions to the skin. CA-MRSA skin infections can be treated by incision, draining and appropriate antibiotics. If these infections aren't treated properly, they can spread quickly and become more difficult to treat.

How is CA-MRSA spread?

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



How can Athletes prevent CA-MRSA skin infections?

- **Practice good hygiene.** Shower thoroughly with soap and as soon as possible after practice and competition. Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. If hands are visibly soiled wash thoroughly with soap and water.
- **Do not share towels or other personal items such as clothing, razors or equipment.** Since these items can become contaminated and may spread disease, regularly wash items after each use.
- **Assess your skin regularly for any lesions.**
- **Avoid contact with other athlete's wounds or bandages.**
- **Perform appropriate first aid for cuts/scrapes.** All cuts and abrasions should be washed with soap and water.
- **Cover all wounds with clean bandages or other dressings daily until healed.** If you have a wound that can not be covered adequately, notify the coach or certified athletic trainer. You should consider refraining from practice or competitions until the wound can be covered or has healed.
- **Refer any wound that could be potentially infectious to appropriate personnel,** including your school nurse, coach, certified athletic trainer, or physician.
- **Sporting gear that is not washable should be wiped down with disinfectants after each use.**
- **Develop a routine cleaning schedule for shared equipment.**
- **Appropriate first aid should be practiced at all times.**
- **Hands should be washed before and after performing wound care.**

Additional information on MRSA
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

This information has been adapted from the CDC