

Community Acquired Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (CA-MRSA)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, participants in competitive sports are at risk for skin infections because of physical contact, skin damage, and sharing of equipment. Humid, crowded conditions such as those found in locker rooms and gyms provide a good place for Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph) to grow. The following will provide the student and parent with practical information:

- Staph is commonly carried in nasal passages, under fingernails, or on the skin without any medical problems. It can enter the body from a cut, insect bite, or surgical incision. Normally a minor infection occurs. However, if a person has a weakened immune system from an illness, the infection could become more serious.
 - Prevention involves players, coaches, parents, and the school. The following practices are highly recommended to parents of players when the conditions warrant:
 - The player should wash hands thoroughly with soap and water during the day. Waterless hand cleanser can be used.
 - The player should practice good hygiene to include showering/bathing with soap and water after all practices and competitions. Previously worn protective clothing can be hot and cause chafing which results in broken skin. Skin trauma from turf or mat burns are other risk factors.
 - Use liquid soap in showers instead of sharing bar soaps; sharing can spread bacteria to other family members. Shower as soon as possible after practice/working out/competitions.
 - It is suggested to wash towels after each use and avoid sharing bed liners, razors, and other personal items.
 - The player should not store or wear previously worn wet clothing. Wet or damp clothing/equipment is a breeding ground for bacteria and fungus.
 - The player will cover all open wounds. If a wound cannot be covered, there is a possibility that the player will need to be excluded from practice/ workout/ competition until the wound heals.
 - Players should report skin lesions to the parent as well as the coach. Parents and coaches will check a lesion that is potentially infected.
 - The player and parents should understand the importance of seeking medical attention at the first sign of infection. Early signs are redness and swelling of the affected area, pain, drainage (pus) around the area of an insect bite, cut or abrasion.
 - If medication is prescribed by a physician, the player should take the entire amount of medication in the prescribed amount of time.
 - The player should avoid getting into a hot tub or whirlpool until all wounds are healed.
- Information obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State Epidemiologist Cristina Pasa. For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.