

# SPORTS MEDICINE ALERT

*For distribution to Coaches, Athletic Directors and Administrators*

## MRSA

MRSA (methicillin-resistant staph aureus) is a type of staph infection that is resistant to many common antibiotics and, in cases where treatment is needed, can be very difficult to treat. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics, but occasionally serious infections require treatment. In the last few years, there have been a number of cases where these bacteria have spread among members of sports teams. Recently, this issue is making headlines as MRSA can have serious and deadly ramifications if not dealt with immediately.

## WARNING SIGNS

It is common for athletes to have pimples, cuts and abrasion on their skin. Coaches must be aware of the signs and symptoms that their student-athletes may exhibit.

- Unusual or increasing pain and/or warmth
- The presence of pus or a pustule
- Induration (hardness)
- Increasing swelling, size or redness of the wound
- Red streaks around the wound
- Fever and/or chills (flu-like symptoms)



**If you have any of these signs or symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.**

# Preventing MRSA

## *Precaution that coaches should take for preventing the spread of MRSA*

- **Insist that your athletes shower with soap as soon as possible after practices and competitions. If MRSA bacteria are present on your skin, you can wash them away before they have a chance to cause infection.**
- **Ensure that athletes do not share equipment, clothing, towels and other personal items. Implement a NO-SHARING rule if you have not done so already.**
- **Whether your athletic department launders practice and game uniforms or athletes do it themselves, implement a policy that uniforms (practice and game) get washed after EACH use.**
- **Ensure that all wounds, cuts and abrasions are covered to help prevent infection, especially during practice and completion.**
- **Equipment MUST be stored in clean, dry areas. A dark, moist, warm environment (lockers) is perfect for bacteria growth.**
- **Clean and disinfect daily, surfaces that are touched on a regular basis. This includes benches, training room tables, weight room equipment and benches.**
- **Wrestling mats MUST be cleaned DAILY before and after use. This would include use by physical education classes.**
- **Research is inconclusive on whether athletic fields can harbor MRSA bacteria. Since some studies have shown that the possibility exists, there are companies that offer antimicrobial treatments for athlete fields.**



# What to do about MRSA in School Athletic Programs

## Infection Control Policies and Procedures Checklist

| Please review the policies and procedures below. Use this tool to help determine which policies/procedures you already have, if they are being followed, and which policies and procedures you need to put in place. This check list is meant to serve as a guideline on reasonable methods of protecting the health and welfare of student athletes. These guidelines are not meant to provide a “standard of care” and are not meant to supersede medical or administrative judgment decisions that must frequently be made on the scene by appropriate individuals. | Policy/Procedures   |                      |                      |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|  | <u>Exist</u><br>(x) | <u>Follow</u><br>(x) | <u>Needed</u><br>(x) |
| <b>General</b>   |                     |                      |                      |
| All hard environmental surfaces that may come in contact with body fluids are cleaned and sanitized daily with EPA-approved disinfectant (if area in use).   |                     |                      |                      |
| All floor and wall padding in athletic area(s) are washed daily, if athletic area is used.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Separate mop heads/ buckets are used for each activity area, locker rooms and rest rooms. Mop heads and buckets are cleaned regularly. (Washable micro-fiber heads or disposable mop cloths are preferred.)  |                     |                      |                      |
| Towels/ linens laundered on premises are washed at a minimum of 160 F and dried in a hot dryer.  |                     |                      |                      |
| <b>Wrestling Room and Mats</b>   |                     |                      |                      |
| Wall padding, benches and door knobs are wiped-down with quaternary ammonium (quat) or 1:100 bleach solution after each practice and meet.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Floors are cleaned before and after any moveable mats are used.  |                     |                      |                      |
| Mat surfaces with <i>small</i> holes or tears are repaired with mat tape. When mat sides are in poor condition, mats are taped together for meets <i>and</i> for practice.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Mat surfaces are replaced promptly when there are <i>large</i> holes or surfaces are excessively worn.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Both sides of mats are thoroughly cleaned before and after each use for practices and meets.   |                     |                      |                      |
| A separate mop head/ bucket is used specifically for cleaning mats; mop heads and buckets are washed regularly.  |                     |                      |                      |
| <b>Weight Room</b>   |                     |                      |                      |
| Weight machine padding is inspected regularly, and promptly replaced if punctured or torn.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Grip areas on weight bars, dumbbells and machines are not taped.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Grip areas on weight bars, dumbbells, and machines, and lift belts are wiped down daily.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Wall dispensers of hand gel ( $\geq 60\%$ alcohol) are placed at each entry/exit. Athletes and coaches are instructed to use when entering/leaving room-minimum use, may use more often.   |                     |                      |                      |
| Floors, benches, supports, pads, light switches and door knobs are cleaned daily (when room in use).   |                     |                      |                      |
| <b>Locker Rooms/Shower Rooms</b>   |                     |                      |                      |
| Wall dispensers for liquid soap are located next to showers.   |                     |                      |                      |
| All shower and locker room areas are cleaned daily (if used).  |                     |                      |                      |
| All floor and walls in athletic area(s) are washed daily, if athletic area is used.  |                     |                      |                      |
| All benches are washed daily, if used.   |                     |                      |                      |