

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In an effort to keep our young athletes healthy, I am working to educate both the athletes and parents/guardians of health issues that may be prevented.

We have been fortunate enough to not have had reported case of Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or commonly known as MRSA. This type of antibiotic-resistant staph infection has gathered more attention due to the rise of cases reported in the athletic arena and its severity if gone untreated.

The infection can first appear as a rash, pimple, insect bite, or boil that becomes **pussy, red, feverish to the touch** (or athlete acquires a fever), and is extremely **painful**. If gone untreated, it will rapidly **grow** in size leading to more serious complications that may require hospitalization and could be fatal.

“Athletic settings are optimal environments for the spread of MRSA due to the occurrence of these five important risk factors: **crowding**, frequent skin-to-skin **contact**, **compromised skin**, (i.e., cuts or abrasions), **contaminated** items and surfaces, and lack of **cleanliness**.” (NATA News, May, 2007).

Proper Prevention:

- Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer routinely.
- **Encourage immediate showering following activity.**
- Avoid whirlpools or common tubs with open wounds, scrapes or scratches.
- **Avoid sharing** towels, razors, deodorants, balms, ointments and daily athletic gear/clothing.
- Properly wash athletic gear and towels after each use (bactericidal soap in hot water, 140°F)
- Administer or seek proper first aid; Inform or refer to appropriate health care personnel for all active skin lesions and lesions that **do not respond** to initial therapy/treatment.
- Encourage health care personnel to seek bacterial cultures to establish a diagnosis.
- **Care and cover** skin lesions appropriately before participation.
- Encourage athletes to report and avoid picking at any lesions, especially if tender or painful.

I encourage you to keep a close eye on any cuts, abrasions, etc., keeping them clean, covered and watching for the signs and symptoms of infection. If you suspect infection please notify your primary care physician. I can also examine any questionable cuts/abrasions and recommend treatments, however, only a physician can test for MRSA. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns!

Thank you!

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Websites for additional information:

National Athletic Trainers Association Official Statement:

http://www.nata.org/statements/official/MRSA_Statement.pdf

Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html