

MRSA & Athletics: Information for Coaches

Staphylococcus aureus (“staph”) infections have been around for a long time causing mild to severe illness. **MRSA** (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is a type of “staph” infection that may be more difficult to treat. These infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen and painful or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia or bloodstream infections. “Staph” is passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or contact with contaminated items. Frequent hand washing and proper wound care are the best ways to prevent MRSA. Follow guidelines below.

DO:

- Wash hands frequently with warm, soapy water for a minimum of 20 seconds. It is one of the best things you can do to prevent infections.
- Routinely clean athletic equipment and surfaces such as weights, workout machines and wrestling mats.
- Carry an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the first aid kit to be able to sanitize hands before & after caring for each injured player.
- Have disposable gloves readily available in the first aid kit for use when caring for the scrapes and cuts of players. Use gloves once, then discard, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after removing gloves.
- Check athletes for skin infections before practice or competitions. (Do not let athletes participate in wrestling if they have potentially contagious wounds, even if covered.) Consider not allowing athletes to participate in any contact sport if they have a potentially contagious wound.
- Cover open wounds with a clean, dry bandage that is taped to the skin on all four sides. Refer athletes with potential skin infections to the doctor. Culturing of wounds should be encouraged.
- Shower with soap and water immediately after practices/competitions where there has been physical contact with athletes.

DO NOT:

- Allow shared water bottles; each player should have his/her own container. Have a strict policy on this!