



## ***WELLNESS UPDATE, OCTOBER 2007***

### **GUIDELINES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF MRSA INFECTIONS**

The September 2007 Wellness Update summarized basic information about MRSA infections, such as, what it is and how it is spread. It also provided basic measures to prevent the spread of MRSA. This Update provides more detailed information about how to prevent to the spread of MRSA infections in an athletic setting.

#### **ATHLETES**

**Athletes with any suspect skin infection should be under appropriate medical treatment before they are allowed to return to participation.**

- Cover all open wounds using non-adherent, sterile dressings. If the wound cannot be adequately covered, the athlete may need to be excluded from any participation until the wound has healed or it can be adequately covered.
- Do NOT allow athletes to share towels or other personal items, i.e., clothing, equipment, razors, etc. Use disposable towels whenever possible.
- Do not allow students with open wounds to use the whirlpool.
- Encourage / require athletes to report all skin lesions to a coach or athletic trainer.
- Instruct athletes to shower after every practice and contest with soap and hot water.
- Require athletes to seek medical attention, and follow medical advice, for any suspicious skin condition.
- Require athletes to wear clean clothes to practice every day.
- Tell athletes NOT to carry clean clothes and dirty clothes in the same gym bag.

## **COACHES, PARENTS & HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

**Educate students, coaches, parents and other staff about the signs and symptoms of MRSA infections.**

**Painful, pimple-like lesions (often mistaken as spider bites)  
Low-grade fever and body aches**

- Require proper hand hygiene (soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after caring for each student) by anyone caring for students.
- Require anyone caring for students' wounds to wear protective gloves and wash their hands with soap and water after caring for a student.

## **FACILITIES**

**Establish a routine for cleaning all shared equipment with a disinfectant cleaner, i.e., weight room equipment, athletic training treatment tables and rehabilitation equipment.**

- Have antibacterial soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for anyone caring for students.
- Use liquid soap dispensers in showers and fill dispensers with antibacterial soap.
- Water used for showers and laundry should be at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit, unless laundry instructions dictate otherwise.

Questions and/or comments about MRSA or other areas dealing with student-athlete's wellness are welcome and encouraged. They should be directed to Alan Beste, ATC, Assistant Executive Director, Iowa High School Athletic Association, PO Box 10, Boone, IA 50036. (515) 432-2011. <abeste@iahsaa.org>

Sources: "Community-Associated MRSA Information for the Public," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 3, 2005; "How USC Football Tackled MRSA," American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, October 2007; "Information for Sports Teams on MRSA," Children's Hospital - St. Louis, Missouri, May 16, 2007; "Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus Infections Among Competitive Sports Participants – Colorado, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Los Angeles County, 2000–2003", MMWR Weekly, August 22, 2003/52(33); 793-795, Centers for Disease Control; "MRSA - How Does it Relate to Athletics?", Stanton, Linda, ATC, NFHS Coaches Quarterly, Fall 2007; "Report of the Iowa Antibiotic Resistance Task Force: A Public Health Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition" Iowa Department of Public Health, Fall 2004.

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Check out this CDC website - <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/>