

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF MRSA (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus)**

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a serious bacterial staph infection. Problems include local infections, systemic infection, and in rare cases, death. Typically, staph infections have been treated with antibiotics such as penicillin. Treatment of MRSA has been difficult because the MRSA bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics. The MRSA bacteria often affected those in hospital settings but over the last few years, it has shown up predominantly in the athletic settings such as locker rooms, weight rooms, and athletic training facilities.

MRSA infections initially appear as a sore pimple and are often mistaken for spider bites and ingrown hairs. Some of the pimples appear red, swollen and have drainage. Other inlets such as abrasions and open wounds allow the MRSA bacteria to enter the body as well. Therefore, maintaining good hygienic practices and avoiding contact with drainage from wounds will help prevent MRSA infections.

MRSA outbreaks are increasing in frequency, therefore more precautions are required. It is critical that all facilities review their current policies regarding the treatment of open wounds to make sure they are in line with the prevention guidelines listed below. Make sure athletes and coaches are educated regarding the problem and the guidelines for prevention.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association and the Centers for Disease Control suggest the following precautions be taken:

**Encourage immediate showering following activity.**

**Avoid sharing towels, razors, and athletic equipment**

**Properly wash athletic equipment and towels after each use**

**Maintain clean facilities and equipment**

**Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer**

**Report ALL open wounds and skin lesions**

**Recommend bacterial cultures for wounds which do not respond to conventional treatments**

**Cover ALL wounds prior to putting on athletic equipment and before competing in practices or competitions**