



Recommendations to Prevent Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Skin Infection among Athletes

- Exclude persons with an infection involving drainage (e.g., pus drainage) from participation until no drainage is present and the wound can be adequately covered with a bandage and clothing. If a wound cannot be covered adequately, players with potentially infectious skin lesions (as determined by a physician) should continue to be excluded from practice, competition, lifting weights, or sharing facilities with others. Their return to practice or other activities should only be allowed when the lesions are healed and drainage or other signs of MRSA infection have resolved as documented by a licensed physician.
- Encourage athletes to report skin lesions to coaches, trainers, the school nurse, or their healthcare provider immediately.
- Encourage all athletes to seek professional medical care for wounds that appear infected and to comply fully with their doctor's recommendations.
- Assess all participants for active skin lesions before all practices or competitions.
- Require preparticipation inspections to be performed only by knowledgeable and qualified persons who can readily recognize potentially infectious lesions.
- Any cut or break in the skin (e.g., mat burns, skin trauma, or shaving injury) should be washed immediately with soap and water and then covered with a clean, dry dressing.
- Require washing and covering of all wounds on a daily basis, **before** and **after** participation in practice, games, or any other use of sports facilities.
- Require optimal hygiene at all times, including frequent hand-washing with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Require showering and thorough washing with soap and water by all participants of contact sports (i.e. wrestling and football) before and after practices or competitions.
- Do not allow players to share towels or other personal items (e.g., clothing, equipment, balms, or lubricants).
- Encourage athletes to use a towel or clothing to act as a barrier between shared equipment and bare skin (e.g., weight and locker room benches and training tables).
- Require that participants have clean clothing and equipment before all practices or competitions.
- Wash uniforms and clothing after each use following the clothing label's instructions for washing and drying. Drying clothes completely in a dryer is preferred.
- Clean athletic facilities regularly and shared surfaces daily (e.g., weights, locker room surfaces, and training equipment).
- Clean equipment, such as helmets and protective gear, on a regular basis according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Clean all other shared equipment after each use and allow items to dry thoroughly.
- Clean wrestling mats at least twice daily, immediately after practice or competition and during a halfway practice break (if possible) or before the start of competitions.
- Clean and disinfect environmental surfaces and athletic equipment that has contacted potentially infectious wound drainage, blood, or non-intact skin. Follow instruction labels on all cleaners/disinfectants, including household chlorine bleach, to ensure safe and correct usage at recommended concentration with appropriate contact time on surfaces.