

## **MRSA & Athletics: Information for Athletes & Families**

Staphylococcus aureus (“staph”) infections have been around for a long time, causing mild to severe illness. MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is a kind 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.

- 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!
- Shower with soap and water immediately after practices/competitions.
- Do NOT share personal hygiene items (bar soap, towels, razors) or clothing.
- Do NOT share water bottles!
- Do NOT share antibiotics or ointments.
- Do NOT touch other peoples’ wounds or bandages.
- Report skin abrasions, wounds and skin infections to a coach/trainer.
- Treat any draining wound as a potential skin infection and have it evaluated by a medical provider. Keep it covered with a bandage that is taped on all four sides.
- Wear practice clothing/uniforms only once, then wash them with detergent and dry in a hot dryer.
- Wear workout clothing that minimizes contact with workout equipment.
- Avoid whirlpools or hot tubs. Individuals with scratches or open wounds can easily infect others in this kind of environment.

