

NYSDOH Recommendations to Prevent CA-MRSA

- Shower thoroughly with soap after all practices and competitions. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. If your hands are visibly soiled, wash thoroughly with soap and water.
- Do not share towels or other personal items such as clothing, razors or equipment. Since these items can become contaminated and may spread disease, regularly wash items after each use.
- Check your skin regularly for any reddened areas, pimples or boils causing pus, swelling or pain.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- All cuts and other abrasions on the skin should be washed with soap and water and covered with dry, sterile bandages. These bandages should be replaced daily until healed.
- If you have a wound that can not be covered adequately, notify your coach or school nurse.
- Consider refraining from practice or competitions until the wound can be covered or has completely healed.
- Tell your school nurse, coach or athletic trainer if you think you have a skin infection. Sports gear, such as helmets, that are non-washable should be wiped down with disinfectants after each use.
- Ask about routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment, such as towels, uniforms and athletic equipment.
- See your health care provider if you think you have CA-MRSA.

- If an infection is identified, involve appropriate personnel, such as coach, school nurse, administration and parents to take proper precautions to avoid the spread of infection.

For additional information on MRSA, visit:

New York State Department of Health
www.nyhealth.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov



An Athlete's Guide to Prevent the Spread of Bacteria

Information in this brochure has been adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services

State of New York
Eliot Spitzer, Governor
Department of Health
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An Athlete's Guide to Prevent the Spread of Bacteria

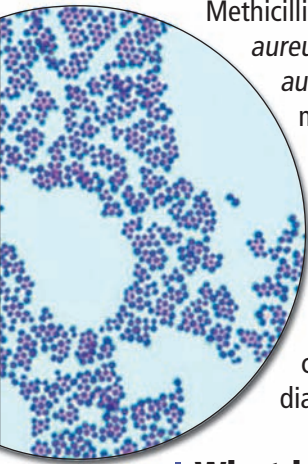


What is *Staphylococcus aureus*?

Staphylococcus aureus (*S. aureus*) is a bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nose of 20-30 percent of healthy individuals. This bacteria often causes skin infections, but can also cause other more serious infections, such as pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a strain of *S. aureus* that is resistant to methicillin, an antibiotic in the same class as penicillin. MRSA is traditionally seen in people recently hospitalized or who have been treated at a health care facility (such as a dialysis center).



What is CA-MRSA?

Community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) infections are considered to be community-associated because they occur in people who have not been hospitalized or had a medical procedure (e.g., dialysis or surgery) within the past year.

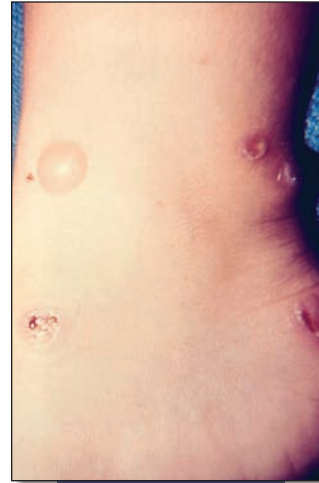
CA-MRSA infections have been documented among athletes, prisoners, military recruits, day care attendees, injection drug users, and others who live in crowded settings or routinely share contaminated items.

What does a CA-MRSA skin infection look like?

A skin infection with CA-MRSA can begin as a reddened area on the skin, or resemble a pimple that can develop into a skin abscess or boil causing fever, pus, swelling or pain.

CA-MRSA skin infections can be treated by a health care professional by incising, draining, and locally caring for the wound. Antibiotics may be administered as necessary. These infections can progress to a more serious and difficult-to-treat stage if not treated properly and promptly.

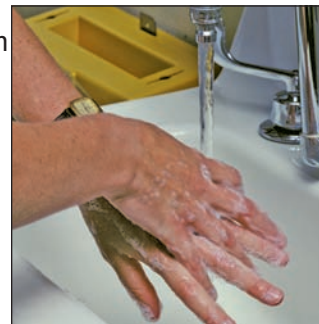
It is also possible for a pre-existing cut, turfburn or other irritated area on the skin to develop an infection with CA-MRSA if the area is not kept clean and dry.



Infection site: ankle
May be mistaken for spider bites

How is CA-MRSA spread?

CA-MRSA is spread through person-to-person contact or contact with contaminated items such as towels, razors, uniforms and athletic equipment. Poor hygiene practices help facilitate the spread of the bacteria.



How can athletes prevent CA-MRSA skin infections?

Both the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified CA-MRSA as a potential problem among athletes. The NCAA recommends practicing good personal hygiene and avoiding contact with infected areas to prevent the transmission of CA-MRSA.

Athletes who participate in sports involving contact (football, wrestling, etc.) should shower with soap as soon as possible after practices and competitions. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

Athletes who share equipment are encouraged to regularly clean this equipment with commercial disinfectants or a solution of one tablespoon of bleach in one quart water.

All cuts or other abrasions on the skin should be washed with soap and water. Clean dressings should be applied every day until healed. Soiled dressings should be disposed of adequately after handling. Hands should be washed before and after performing wound care.

For thorough care instruction, consult your school nurse or your health care professional.