



MRSA “Mersa” INFECTION

Do you remember the newspaper articles about the “superbugs” that are being created by overuse of antibiotics? One of those “superbugs” is now making it out of the hospital and nursing home and onto the athletic fields. MRSA stands for Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus. This is not the old staph infection that we all dreaded as a child. As the name shows this staph bug is resistant to many of the antibiotics that we would usually use to kill staph bacteria.

In the last 2 years or so there have been numerous outbreaks of MRSA infections among athletes including football players, wrestlers, and soccer players. The infection is seen in the skin in the form of a “boil” or cellulitis. If a skin infection is suspected by an athlete, coach, or parent it is important to move ahead with the following:

1. report this immediately to your school’s certified athletic trainer for evaluation
2. if deemed necessary by the athletic trainer see a physician with experience in treating these infections in athletes as soon as possible
3. Make sure that any closed infections (boils, abscesses, cysts) are opened and drained completely
4. Make sure a culture of the material is performed
5. follow closely with the physician and athletic trainer in order to get the athlete back to their sport safely and quickly while protecting other athletes from infection

Can MRSA be prevented? YES

Practice the following:

1. Cover all wounds.
2. Encourage good hygiene, including showering and washing with soap after every practice
3. Ensure availability of adequate soap and hot water;
4. Discourage sharing of towels and personal items
5. Establish routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment - at least once a week but ideally after each use
6. Launder personal items such as towels and supporters after each use
7. Train athletes and coaches in first aid for wounds and recognition of wounds that are potentially infected;
8. Encourage athletes to report skin lesions to athletic trainers
9. Encourage coaches to assess athletes regularly for skin lesions

If you have any questions regarding MRSA infections in athletes please contact your school’s athletic trainer. Feel free to contact CATC with questions, concerns, or evaluations regarding MRSA problems at 610-685-7200.

24 HOUR ATHLETIC INJURY HOTLINE 610-685-7200

AVOID THE EMERGENCY ROOM WAIT

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