

- Practice good hygiene. Shower thoroughly with soap after all practices and competitions. Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. If 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.
- Assess skin regularly for any lesions.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Perform appropriate first aid for cuts / scrapes - all cuts and other abrasions on the skin should be washed with soap and water.
- Cover all wounds with clean bandages or other forms of dressings daily until healed. If you have a wound that cannot be covered adequately, notify the coach or your school nurse and consider refraining from practice or competitions until the wound can be covered or has completely healed.
- Refer any wound that could be potentially infectious to appropriate personnel, including your school nurse, coach, or family members if warranted.

- Sports gear (i.e., helmets) that are nonwashable should be wiped down with disinfectants after each use.
- Inquire of routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment (i.e., towels, clothing, athletic equipment).
- Visit your healthcare provider if you think you have CA-MRSA.

For information on CA-MRSA visit the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at: <http://www.cdc.gov>

You may also contact your local health department and/or your healthcare provider for more information about CA-MRSA.

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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

## *Community-Associated*

# MRSA

(CA-MRSA) in Athletic Settings



A Student Guide for  
Control and Prevention

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## What is Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus (*S. aureus*) is a bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nose of 20-30% of healthy individuals. This bacteria often causes skin infections, however it 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 infections are considered to be community-associated because they occur in people who have not been hospitalized or had a medical procedure (Le., dialysis or surgery) within the past year.

CA-MRSA infections have been documented among athletes, prisoners, military recruits, daycare 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 CAMRSA 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 incising, draining, and locally caring for the wound. Antibiotics can be administered as necessary. These infections can progress to a more serious and difficult-to-treat stage if not cared for properly and promptly.

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

## How is CA-MRSA spread?

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

## 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 an emerging problem for athletic participants. The NCAA recommends practicing good personal hygiene and avoiding contact with infected areas to prevent the transmission of CA-MSRA.

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

Athletes who participate in activities where equipment is often collectively used are encouraged to reduce sharing and to regularly clean equipment with commercial disinfectants or a 1:100 solution of diluted bleach (1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart water).

Additionally, appropriate first aid should be practiced at all times - 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 adequately disposed of after handling. Hands should be washed before and after performing wound care.

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