



PROVIDER GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTION, DETECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF METHICILLIN RESISTANT *STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS* (MRSA) SKIN INFECTION IN ATHLETIC TEAMS

TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Health Care Providers, Health Care Facilities, High School and College Athletic Directors and Other Health Partners

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DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2006

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

With the start of the fall sports season, physicians and athletic directors should be vigilant for MRSA skin infections in members of athletic teams, especially wrestling, football and other contact sports. Signs of skin infection include redness, warmth, swelling, pain and/or drainage. Athletes with these symptoms should be referred to a physician. Methicillin resistant skin infections may not respond to some commonly used antibiotics, so doctors must usually take a culture to help them choose the right drug.

Community acquired MRSA skin infections and outbreaks have become increasingly common in the last few years in West Virginia and nationally. Some communities now report a majority of isolates of *Staphylococcus aureus* are resistant to methicillin. *Staphylococcus aureus* is easily spread by skin-to-skin contact and shared items such as clothing, towels, exercise equipment, etc.

Prevention guidelines for athletic team members include:

- 1. Cover all wounds. If a wound cannot be covered adequately, consider excluding players with potentially infectious skin lesions from practice or competitions until the lesions are healed or can be covered adequately.**
- 2. Encourage good hygiene, including showering and washing with soap after all practices and competitions.**
- 3. Ensure availability of adequate soap and hot water.**
- 4. Discourage sharing of towels and personal items (e.g., clothing or equipment).**
- 5. Establish routine cleaning schedules for shared equipment and facilities.**
- 6. Train athletes and coaches in first aid for wounds and recognition of wounds that are potentially infected.**
- 7. Encourage athletes to report skin lesions to coaches and encourage coaches to assess athletes regularly for skin lesions.**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Information sheets for coaches and other school staff are on the website at:
<http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/TeamBrochure2ndTry.pdf>

Information sheets for athletic team members may be found at:
http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/pdfs/idep/TeamBrochure_Students3.pdf

Guidelines for health care providers are found at:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/ar/CAMRSA_ExpMtgStrategies.pdf

Reporting of outbreaks, including outbreaks of community-acquired MRSA is required by law from hospitals, health care providers, schools and camps (64CSR7-3.3.b.6). Report outbreaks immediately to your local health department.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to Local Health Departments and Professional Societies. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information to the targeted audiences noted.

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Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

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