

Skin Infections- MRSA Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus

Outbreaks of skin infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria have been increasingly reported in the news about sports teams including football, basketball, wrestling, volleyball and rowing teams.

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to simply as “staph,” are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples or boils) and can be treated without antibiotics. However, staph also can cause serious infections such as pneumonia, bloodstream infections and joint infections. Most infections occur through direct physical contact of the staphylococci with a break in the skin (cut or scrape). The staph can be spread by the infected person to someone else or an object. Inanimate objects, such as clothing, sports equipment, personal items (soap or wash cloths) or furniture may be a source of infection if they become soiled with wound drainage. A non-infected person that comes into contact with this item through a break in their skin may also be at risk of becoming infected.

A single infected athlete can quickly become the source of an outbreak that can affect the entire team.

Consider a wound infectious if there is any purulent (pus) from the wound, especially if there is a fever, redness, or tenderness around the wound or if they are being treated for an infection. Once the wound has no drainage, and the doctor clears the person, the person can be considered non-infectious.

Report any draining wounds to the school nurse and see your doctor for an evaluation if you have a draining wound.

HAND WASHING is the single most important behavior in preventing the spread of skin infections.