

## **Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Infections Emerging in Competitive Sports Participants**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has recently reported outbreaks of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* as a cause of skin infections among participants in competitive sports.

Possible risk factors include skin trauma from contact sports, shaving and sharing of unwashed towels, and unwashed sports equipment and uniforms. Maintaining good hygiene and avoiding contact with skin lesions of other players are the best methods for avoiding the spread of *Staphylococcus aureus*. All persons associated with competitive sports teams, including players, coaches, teachers, parents and administrators, can help prevent sports related skin infections and should be aware of the following preventative measures:

- ❖ Cover all wounds. If wounds cannot be covered adequately, consider excluding players from practice or competition until lesions are healed or covered adequately.
- ❖ Encourage good hygiene, including showering and washing with soap after each practice and competition.
- ❖ Ensure that adequate soap and hot water are available.
- ❖ Discourage sharing of towels and personal items or equipment.
- ❖ Train athletes and coaches in first aid for wounds and how to recognize potential infections
- ❖ Encourage athletes to report skin lesions and abrasions to coaches to assess for skin infections.

Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

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