



**Infection Control Guidance**  
**For**  
**Middle & High School Athletic Directors, Coaches and Environmental Services Staff**  
**\*\*DOCUMENT FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

**Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)** is a type of “*staph*” bacteria that is not easily treated with penicillin or other common antibiotics. MRSA commonly causes skin infections that may look like spider bites, infected turf burns, impetigo, boils or abscesses. It is spread by touching the infection/drainage or by touching surface that have come into contact with the infection/drainage. MRSA can stay on surfaces for weeks.

Frequent hand-washing is the best way to prevent MRSA and other infections. It is also important to have students and coaches practice good hygiene, including showering after practice and meets; not sharing personal hygiene items and not participating in practices/meets with a potentially infected skin wound/lesion. A healthy environment should be maintained by routinely cleaning athletic equipment (balls, bats, rackets, etc), and surfaces, such as benches and wrestling mats.

Ask your athletes to report **ALL** potential skin infections to their coaches, the trainer and/or the school nurse. Open wounds should be covered with a clean, dry bandage that is securely taped to the skin on all four sides. Please do not let athletes participate in any contact sport if they have a potentially contagious wound, even if the wound is covered, and they cannot return until cleared by a doctor.

The following guidelines are recommendations to help prevent the spread of MRSA:

**GENERAL GUIDANCE**

1. All environmental hard surfaces that may come into contact with body fluids should be cleaned and sanitized daily with an EPA-approved disinfectant, including benches, weights, workout machines, etc.
2. All floors/wall padding in athletic settings should be washed daily (if room is used).
3. Locker rooms including shower areas should be cleaned daily, if used.
4. If soap is furnished, it **SHOULD NOT** be bar soap. Liquid soap is recommended and should be accessible from a wall dispenser.
5. Towels should not be shared. If they are washed at school, they should be washed in soap and water at a minimum temperature of 71°C (160°F), and dried in a hot dryer.
6. Ensure all athletic areas, locker rooms and restrooms have separate cleaning mops and buckets, and all mops (washable micro-fiber heads or disposable mop cloths preferred) and buckets are cleaned regularly.

## WRESTLING ROOM AND MATS

1. Wipe down padding along walls, benches and door pulls/knobs with a quaternary ammonium, bleach solution (household bleach diluted 1:100 with water), or other approved cleaners after practices/matches.
2. Clean and sanitize the floors where mats are to be used ***before and after*** each use.
3. Use “dedicated” mops to clean athletic areas, and wash mop heads on a regular basis. May use Swiffer-style mop with disposable mop cloths that are discarded after each use.
4. May use mat tape to cover *small* holes and *small* tears on the top and bottom surfaces of mats. Tape mats together for practice as well as for matches to cover up mat sides that are in poor condition.
5. Promptly replace mat coverings when there are medium to large holes and/or large areas of excessive wear and tear.
6. Clean and sanitize mats ***before and after*** each practice and match. Before mats are rolled up for storage, all sides should be thoroughly cleaned.

## WEIGHT ROOM

1. Replace all torn and worn padding on weight machines.
2. Place wall dispensers with 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizer inside weight room. Athletes/coaches should be instructed to use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving weight room (minimum use, may use more often). If hands are visibly dirty, they should use soap and water to wash before entering the weight room.
3. Remove tape from weight bars and grips (metal surfaces are easier to wipe down).
4. Wipe down grips on weights and lifting belts at least daily.
5. Clean floors, benches, supports, pads, light switches and door pulls/knobs daily.

## LOCKER/SHOWER ROOMS

1. Provide wall-mounted dispensers for soap in shower rooms (next to showers).
2. Soap dispensers should have disposable soap “unit” refills.
3. Provide adequate shower facilities in new and remodeled schools.

## SPORTS EQUIPMENT

1. Schedule regular cleanings for sports equipment: balls (footballs, basketballs, baseballs, softballs, volleyballs), racket grips, bats, gloves, pads, etc.
2. Clean and sanitize sports equipment that comes into direct contact with the skin of players, such as wrestling headgear, football helmets and fencing equipment (including wires) after each use.

## COACH

1. Include 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the coach’s first aid kit so the coaches/trainers will always be able to sanitize hands before and after caring for each injured player when soap and water is not readily accessible.
2. Have disposable gloves readily available in first aid kit for use when caring for the scrapes and cuts of players. Use disposable gloves once and discard after each use, then wash hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after removing gloves.
3. Check athletes for skin infections before practice or games/matches. Do not let athletes participate if they have potentially contagious wounds, even if covered, unless cleared by a physician. Consider not letting athletes participate in any contact sport if they have a potentially contagious wound.
4. Refer athletes with potential skin infections either to the clinic or their own medical provider.
5. Use scoop (not hands) when removing ice from coolers when making ice packs to treat sports injuries. Also, clean scoop daily when in use, and do not store the scoop inside the ice chest/cooler.
6. Do not have shared “drinking” from water bottles; each player should have his/her own water container.
7. Shower immediately after matches/games/practices when there is physical contact with the athletes.

## **ATHLETE**

1. **Remind athletes that washing their hands with warm, soapy water frequently is one of the best things they can do to prevent MRSA and other diseases.**
2. Strongly encourage showering with soap and water immediately after practice/games/matches.
3. Remind athletes **NOT** to share personal hygiene items (bar soap, towels, razors, etc.), clothing or water bottles.
4. Remind athletes **NOT** to share antibiotics or ointments and salves.
5. Remind athletes **NOT** to touch other peoples' skin infections.
6. Ask athletes to treat any draining wound as a potential skin infection.
7. Encourage athletes who use the weight room to wear workout clothing that minimizes contact with benches, weight equipment, etc.
8. Remind athletes to wear practice clothes/uniforms only once, then wash them with soap and water, and dry in a hot dryer.
9. Remind athletes to report *all* skin abrasions, wounds and potential skin infections to a coach/trainer and/or the school nurse.
10. Ask athletes to avoid whirlpools or common tubs. Individuals with scratches or open wounds can easily infect others in this type of environment.

## **OUTSIDE GROUPS USING HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FACILITIES**

1. Continue to ensure that custodians know schedule for outside events and are available to clean before students use any of the equipment/facilities.
2. Instruct outside groups to use the "standard school-recommended" cleaning products if they are responsible for any cleaning (i.e. wrestling mats, weight room equipment, and shower facilities) after use.

**Further information about MRSA can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/MRSAinschools>.**

**Source: Infection Control Guidance for Middle & High School Athlete Directors  
The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. 1/2007.**

**For *product information*, contact your Environmental Services Technician or Grainger at 1-800-803-7320.**

**If you have any additional questions, please contact your school's Cluster Nurse or the Fulton County Schools' Office of Student Health Services at 404-305-2177.**