

HYGIENE GUIDELINES

To prevent the spread of MRSA and staphylococcal infections among athletes follow these guidelines:

DO NOT:

- Share shower towels
- Share razors and equipment
- Share deodorant
- Share balms or ointments among teammates or friends
- Share blankets or pillows at tournaments or on the bus
- Lay on the floor of the locker room
- Use community towels on the sidelines to be shared among athletes, including ice buckets and wet towels to cool athletes (use single use disposable towels instead or do not directly touch athletes)
- Use whirlpools and other common use medical equipment when infected
- Share beds with friends or teammates without changing the linens first

DO:

- Clean equipment, weights, mats, and work-out machines after each individual use, not each session
- Maintain a clean locker room, including showers, floors, and carpets
- Occasionally wipe down and disinfect meeting rooms, desks, and common areas
- Encourage showering and hair washing with hot water and antibacterial soaps and shampoos after every practice, competition, or workout
- Frequently wash uniforms, practice gear (including pads and sports braces), and towels in hot water. Add bleach if you can without ruining your clothes
- Avoid close direct contact with infected individuals
- Finish all antibiotics prescribed to you by your doctor, unless your doctor tells you otherwise
- Use gloves when handling, washing, or moving bloody or sweaty equipment, jerseys, or bandages. Throw away used bandages and bloody gauze in red biohazard bags
- Train athletes, coaches, and medical staff to recognize potentially infected wounds and administer basic first aid treatment for wounds
- Keep all wounds (even small abrasions, turf burns, or scratches) bandaged and covered with an antibiotic ointment when participating. If a wound can not be adequately covered consider excluding the athlete from participation
- Report any skin abnormalities, lesions, or wounds to your doctor or certified athletic trainer
- Place and use alcohol-based hand sanitizers in athletic facilities and in medical bags
- Have medical staff and coaches wash with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, after contact with each patient/ athlete that is bleeding or very sweaty

MRSA is a serious problem that has crossed over from the hospital setting to the general population and athletics. Though it is a threat to athletes and the people they come in contact with, it can often be prevented. By being aware of the signs and symptoms of MRSA, using good hygiene, and carefully following the prevention steps listed above many MRSA cases can be avoided, allowing athletes to continue their training routines and to perform at their top level.