

MRSA IN ATHLETICS



Skin infections occasionally become a problem in all sports, with participation in some activities more prone for exposure to infections than others. Peters Township School District follows a detailed cleaning schedule and uses the recommended guidelines from the National Federation of State High School Associations to: (1) help identify an outbreak, (2) means to minimize its spread and (3) preventative measures to reduce its occurrence.



If a case of MRSA is identified in a Peters Township athlete, there are ways to help reduce its spread:

- When you or someone you know has any of the signs of MRSA, immediately report it to your coaches, trainers, and parents or guardians. The athlete will then be held out of all practices and competitions until a medical diagnosis and clearance is obtained.
- If an athlete with a suspect skin condition is cleared for participation, they must cover the affected area(s) with a water resistant dressing, or gauze pad with water resistant covering on at least one side, until the lesion(s) is completely gone.
- If the lesion(s) is on an athlete's face or neck, they should launder their pillow case on a daily basis.
- Athletes with any signs of a communicable skin condition should wash their hands frequently to avoid contaminating themselves, or others. Athletes with communicable skin conditions must be made aware that contact they have with others during the school day, outside of their sport's practices or competitions, may spread the condition to others.



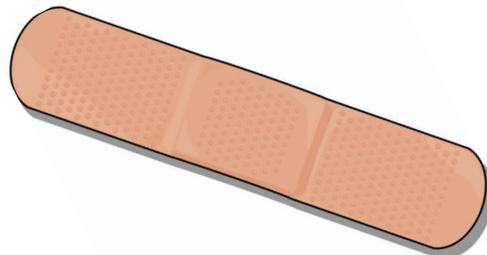
WHAT HAS PTSD DONE TO PROTECT MY CHILD FROM MRSA?

The Peters Township School District takes a proactive approach to protect students throughout the District. This informational brochure is made available to the staff, students, and parents in all nurses' offices, the athletic office, and in the main office of each building. In addition, MRSA prevention and instructions on what to do if a case is suspected are supplied in the student handbook for each building. Throughout the District, regular cleaning schedules have been outlined and procedures are reviewed regularly with the custodial and buildings and grounds staff.

Any skin irritation should be reported to the school nurse to evaluate the irritation and document the findings. Parents/Guardians will be notified and a course of further action will be identified.

The Peters Township School District reminds parents and students to:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, razors, sports equipment or soap.



PREVENTING MRSA

What Every Parent Should Know

Peters Township School District
631 E. McMurray Rd.
McMurray, PA 15317
724-941-6251
www.ptsd.k12.pa.us

WHAT IS MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection is caused by staphylococcus aureus bacteria — often called “staph.”

Staph bacteria are generally harmless unless they enter the body through a cut or other wound, and even then they often cause only minor skin problems in healthy people. In the 1990s, a type of MRSA began showing up in the wider community. Today, that form of staph, known as community-associated MRSA, or CA-MRSA, is responsible for many serious skin and soft tissue infections and for a serious form of pneumonia.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MRSA?

In the community, most MRSA infections are minor skin infections that may appear as sores or boils that are often red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage.

These skin infections commonly occur either at sites of breaks in the skin such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered by hair (for example, the back of the neck, groin, buttock, armpit, or beard area of men).

MRSA and other staph skin infections begin with classic signs of infection: a red, swollen, and painful area on the skin that is often warm to the touch. As the infection becomes more serious, symptoms can include: a skin abscess, drainage of pus or other fluids from the site, fever, chills, rash, fatigue, muscle aches, and headache.

HOW IS MRSA SPREAD?

Like other causes of skin infections, MRSA is usually spread from person to person through direct skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces (i.e. towels, used bandages, or weight training equipment surfaces) that have touched a person's infection.

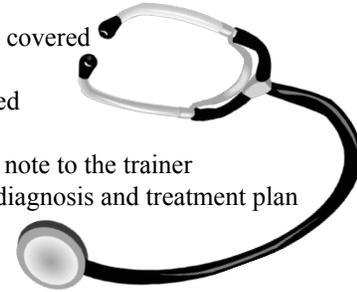
SIMPLE MEASURES TO PREVENT OR MINIMIZE THE RISK OF MRSA

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- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly throughout the day with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Wash hands before leaving the restroom
 - Shower after all athletic competition
 - Use liquid soap, not bar soap
 - Refrain from cosmetic (whole body) shaving
 - Avoid sharing items such as towels, razors, equipment, soap, etc.
 - Shower before using whirlpools or cold tubs
 - If you have any open wounds, sore, scratches, or scrapes avoid whirlpools, hydrotherapy pools, cold tubs, swimming pools and other common tubs
 - Clean and properly cover open wounds, abrasions, lacerations, etc. at all times
 - Do not ignore skin infections, pimples, pustules, abscesses, etc. Report these to a school nurse, sports medicine staff member and/or physician immediately
 - Have all suspicious lesions evaluated before practice or competition
 - Wash all work-out gear after practice or competition
 - Do not share water bottles

HOW DO I TREAT A MRSA INFECTION?

As with any bacterial infection:

- Consult your doctor
- Tell your doctor if you are an athlete
- Take all antibiotics as prescribed by your doctor, even if the infection seems to have healed
- Inform your doctor, trainer and parent if the wound is not improving
- Keep the wound covered at all times until completely healed
- Bring a doctor's note to the trainer indicating your diagnosis and treatment plan



REFERENCES

Allegheny County Health Department
Cancer Research UK
Center for Disease Control (CDC)
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Pennsylvania State Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)
Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL)