

The best way to prevent MRSA is good hygiene

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

Athletes must follow good hygiene practices at home and at school to prevent many illnesses

MRSA IS PREVENTED BY:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Cleaning any breaks in the skin, such as a cut, and covering with a bandage until healed
- Bathing regularly, especially after athletic competition or other skin-to-skin contact
- Changing bedding often and washing in hot water and drying thoroughly
- Not sharing personal items such as towels, razors or toothbrushes
- Seeing your health care provider and following instructions if you have an infection

Clean shared equipment, such as weight machines, before and after each use

STAY IN THE GAME:

As long as a wound can be completely covered by a bandage that stays in place and contains any drainage, an infected athlete may compete

ATHLETES SHOULD NOT:

- Share personal items such as towels, soap and razors
- Share a whirlpool or ice bath if they have a break in the skin such as a cut or turf burn
- Share ointments

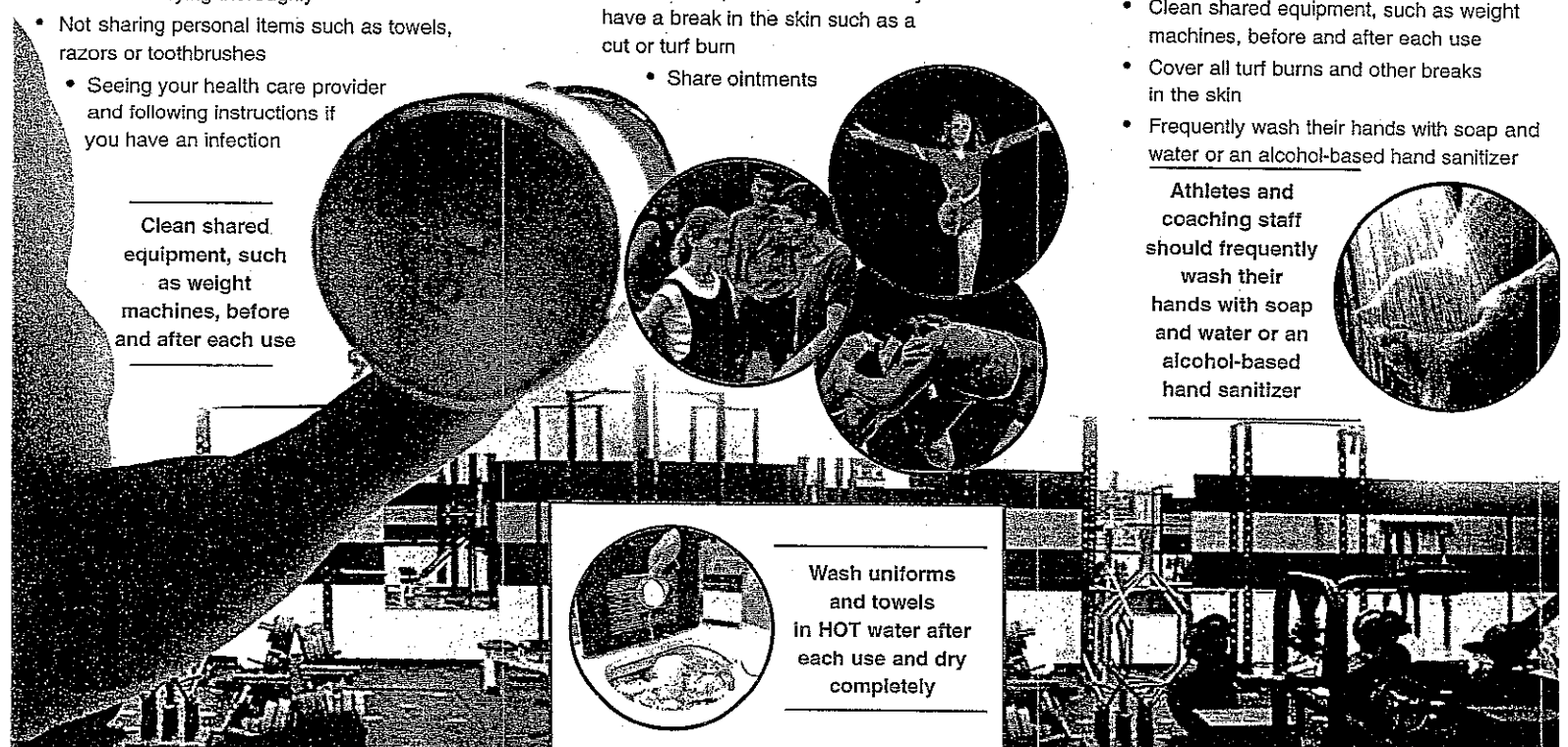
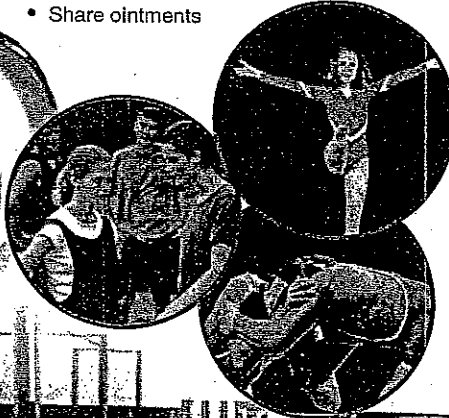
ATHLETES SHOULD:

- Shower after each practice or competition
- Wash uniforms and towels in hot water after each use and dry completely
- Report any suspicious skin injuries to their coach, parent and/or health care provider
- Follow all the directions of their health care provider if they are diagnosed with MRSA
- Clean shared equipment, such as weight machines, before and after each use
- Cover all turf burns and other breaks in the skin
- Frequently wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Athletes and coaching staff should frequently wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer



Wash uniforms and towels in HOT water after each use and dry completely



Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

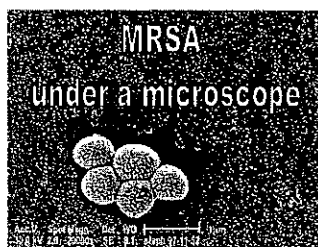
Cases of MRSA continue to be identified in the community. MRSA is a type of infection caused by *Staph* bacteria that is resistant to some common antibiotics such as penicillin. While most cases have involved athletes, cases involving non-athletes have also occurred. Skin infections such as abscesses and boils are the most common form of this infection. The infected area usually starts out as a small bump resembling a pimple, which becomes redder and often develops pus drainage.

Staphylococcus bacteria (or *Staph*) are commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy individuals. *Staph* and MRSA are spread by close contact either through direct physical contact with an infected individual or by touching objects (e.g. towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, or sports equipment) contaminated with the bacteria.

In most cases, MRSA infections are mild and can be treated successfully with proper hygiene and the appropriate antibiotics. If left untreated, MRSA can progress to a life-threatening infection and become difficult to treat because there are fewer effective antibiotics available at this stage of the illness.

Here are a few guidelines to help prevent and control the spread of MRSA in the community:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms). An individual who becomes infected should wash all bed linens and clothes in hot water and laundry detergent frequently until the infection has cleared.
- Report any suspicious skin sore or boil to your healthcare provider (including the school nurse) immediately.



- If you participate in sports involving close personal contact (e.g. wrestling and football), shower with soap immediately after each practice, game, or match.
- Non-washable gear (i.e. head protectors), should be wiped down with alcohol after each use.
- Athletic equipment such as wrestling or gymnastics mats should be wiped down regularly with an antibacterial solution.
- Athletes should receive a total body check prior to any game, match, or tournament.
- Individuals with an infection involving drainage (i.e. pus drainage) should be excluded from participation in sporting events and practices until no pus drainage is present, the infected site can be adequately covered with a bandage and clothing, and a physician's release has been obtained.
- Any cut or break in the skin should be washed with soap and water and a clean dressing applied on a daily basis.

More information about Community Associated MRSA is available on the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/>