



PETERS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT MRSA INFORMATIONAL PACKET

WHAT IS MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection is caused by staphylococcus aureus bacteria — often called "staph." Decades ago, a strain of staph emerged in hospitals that was resistant to the broad-spectrum antibiotics commonly used to treat it. Dubbed methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), it was one of the first germs to outwit all but the most powerful drugs.

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.

MRSA might spread more easily among athletes because during participation athletes have repeated skin-to-skin contact, get breaks in the skin such as cuts and abrasions that if left uncovered allow staph and MRSA to enter and cause infection, share items and surfaces that come into direct skin contact, and have difficulty staying clean.

SIMPLE MEASURES TO PREVENT OR MINIMIZE THE RISK OF MRSA

<p>PERSONAL HYGIENE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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 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 ❖ Notify parents and coach about any skin sores and have it evaluated by a health care provider before returning to competition ❖ Do not ignore skin infections, pimples, pustules, abscesses, etc. Report these to a sports medicine staff member and/or physician immediately ❖ Have all suspicious lesions evaluated before practice or competition
<p>FACILITY MAINTENANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintain clean facilities and equipment ❖ Stick to regularly scheduled cleaning protocols ❖ Clean equipment (mats) before each practice or event ❖ Use a barrier (towel) between yourself and shared equipment ❖ Wipe equipment surfaces before and after use with a fast acting disinfectant; wipes available in the weight room for immediate use by everyone that uses equipment
<p>GENERAL GUIDELINES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wash all work-out gear after practice or competition ❖ Don't share water bottles

GENERAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES

While MRSA is more commonly linked with athletics, the Peters Township School District takes a proactive approach to protect students throughout the District. An informational brochure “Preventing MRSA: What Every Parent Should Know” is produced by the Communications Office and 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 are identified 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.

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. Recent outbreaks of MRSA have occurred prompting the development of new guidelines from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee to: (1) help identify an outbreak, (2) means to minimize its spread and (3) preventative measures to reduce its occurrence. First and foremost, simple hygienic measures must be used to prevent any form of infection from developing. All athletes should shower after each practice or competing event. Workout gear or clothing needs to be washed at the end of each day or practice. Be sure to properly clean and disinfect any equipment that is in direct contact with an athlete's skin, i.e. mats, on a daily basis. Notify your parent and coach about any suspicious skin lesion and seek medical attention before practice or competing.

Preparation for competition in any sport requires proper training and practice. Whether it means preparing your body or maintaining your equipment, proper preparation is necessary. Keeping your body and equipment clean is part of that process. Infectious diseases do propagate and are easily transmitted in the sports environment. Contact sports and those with heavy amounts of equipment are more prone than others, but proper hygiene is necessary in all sports to reduce the potential of transmitting these agents.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK FOR MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS?

Skin infections, including MRSA, have been reported mostly in high-physical-contact sports such as wrestling, football, and rugby. However, MRSA infections have been reported among athletes in other sports such as soccer, basketball, field hockey, volleyball, rowing, martial arts, fencing, and baseball.

Even though little physical contact occurs in some sports during participation, skin contact or activities that may lead to the spread of MRSA skin infections may take place before or after participation such as in the locker room. Therefore, anyone participating in organized recreational sports should be aware of the signs of possible skin infections and follow preventive measures.

REDUCING THE SPREAD OF MRSA IN ATHLETICS

If a case of MRSA is identified in a Peters Township athlete, there are ways to help reduce its spread. The following guidelines can help in this facet:

- ❖ 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 an occlusive (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 ARE THE PTSD GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING POSSIBLE CASES OF MRSA IN AN ATHLETE?

- ❖ Any skin irritation must be reported to the athletic trainer and coach the trainer will then evaluate the irritation and document the findings.
- ❖ The athletic trainer will decide what further course of action needs to be taken, if any.
- ❖ If a referral to a physician is necessary, the athlete will be removed from participation until receiving clearance to resume participating from the physician.
- ❖ Such documentation needs to be received by the athletic office before an athlete is allowed to resume participating in his/her activity.
- ❖ In addition, all appropriate medical forms must be filled out by the examining physician for the student to rejoin his/her team.

SHOULD ATHLETES WITH MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION?

While Health Department regulations do not prohibit a student from attending school or participation in an activity/sport if the infection can be covered, Peters Township follows the guidelines below:

- ❖ If sport specific rules do not exist, in general, athletes should be excluded if wounds cannot be properly covered during participation.
- ❖ A healthcare provider might exclude an athlete if the activity poses a risk to the health of the infected athlete (such as injury to the infected area), even though the infection can be properly covered.
- ❖ Athletes with active infections or open wounds should not use whirlpools or therapy pools not cleaned between athletes and other common-use water facilities like swimming pools until infections and wounds are healed.
- ❖ Peters Township School District utilizes a physician release form that was created through the NFHS Sport Medicine Advisory Committee that allows wrestlers to participate after being cleared by a physician (Appendix I).
- ❖ Other athletes that contract MRSA, or any other communicable skin condition, must be cleared by a physician before they are allowed to participate in their activity again

HOW SHOULD DISTRICT FACILITIES BE MANAGED WHEN A MRSA INFECTION OCCURS?

- ❖ Athletic facilities such as locker rooms should always be kept clean whether or not MRSA infections have occurred among athletes. (See Custodial Schedule, page 6)
- ❖ Review cleaning procedures and schedules with the janitorial/environmental service staff.
 - Cleaning procedures should focus on commonly touched surfaces and surfaces that come into direct contact with people's bare skin each day.
 - Cleaning with detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered detergents/disinfectants will remove MRSA from surfaces.
 - Follow the instruction labels on all cleaners and disinfectants, including household chlorine bleach, to make sure they are used safely and correctly.
 - If you are using household chlorine bleach, check the label to see if the product has specific instructions for disinfection. If no disinfection instructions exist, then use ¼ cup of regular household bleach in 1 gallon of water (a 1:100 dilution equivalent to 500-615 parts per million [ppm] of available chlorine) for disinfection of pre-cleaned surfaces.

- Environmental cleaners and disinfections should not be put onto skin or wounds and should never be used to treat infections.
- The EPA provides a list of registered products that work against MRSA, (List H): <http://epa.gov/oppad001/chemregindex.htm>.
- ❖ While there is a lack of evidence that large-scale use (e.g. spraying or fogging rooms or surfaces) of disinfectants will prevent MRSA infections when used alone, using these measures in conjunction with other disinfecting procedures is recommended.
- ❖ Repair or dispose of equipment and furniture with damaged surfaces that do not allow surfaces to be adequately cleaned.
- ❖ Covering infections will greatly reduce the risk of surfaces becoming contaminated with MRSA.
- ❖ Equipment, such as helmets and protective gear, should be cleaned according to the equipment manufacturers' instructions to make sure the cleaner will not harm the item.
- ❖ Shared equipment should be cleaned according to the most up-to-date protocol that is being utilized by the custodial staff

SPORT TEAMS PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The following measures may help prevent MRSA infections among participants in contact sports such as football, wrestling, rugby, hockey, basketball, etc.:

- ❖ Team members should practice good hand hygiene by washing hands when entering and leaving locker rooms, weight rooms, and other common sports activity rooms, and prior to participating in practice or competition. Alcohol hand sanitizers may be used instead of soap and water if hands are not visibly soiled.
- ❖ Cover any open wounds or sores before participating in sports activities. Make sure bandages and dressings stay in place during activities.
- ❖ Consider excluding players with potentially infectious skin lesions from sports activities until wounds are healed or can be adequately covered.
- ❖ Participants in contact sports should be encouraged to shower with soap and warm water after practice and competition. If there are active infections of MRSA among team members, consider implementing antibacterial soap for showering.
- ❖ Locker rooms should have adequate sinks, showers, and soap supplies to encourage good personal hygiene.
- ❖ Sports participants should not share personal items such as towels and razors.
- ❖ Uniforms and equipment should be routinely cleaned after each use. Items that can be laundered should be washed in detergent and water at $\geq 160^{\circ}$ F for at least 25 minutes. If lower washing temperatures are used, oxygenated laundry detergents formulated for low temperatures washing should be used. Use an automatic dryer on hot temperature (180° F) for items that can withstand those temperatures. Items should be used only after they are completely dry.
- ❖ Maintain clean locker rooms and shower areas with regularly scheduled cleaning procedures.
- ❖ Athletes, trainers, and coaches should be trained to watch for wounds and skin lesions among team members, and to recommend athletes seek medical care if lesions appear infected.

INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR COACHES

As developments in the treatment and prevention of MRSA continue to emerge, the Peters Township School District coaching staff is routinely provided with up-to-date information regarding the latest in prevention, suggested treatment, proper facility maintenance, spotting cases, etc. In addition to taking this proactive approach, the District has also sponsored a speaker

from UPMC to visit the District to speak to parents and coaches regarding MRSA. Appropriate information is also supplied to coaches that can be passed on to students regarding MRSA and the coaches work in collaboration with the athletic office to address the needs and concerns of the students. The District’s maintenance protocol is also shared with the coaches with regard to the athletic facilities and they are made aware of changes that may be implemented over time.

PETERS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT CUSTODIAL SCHEDULE

The following is the current protocol for cleaning and disinfecting the athletic facilities within the District. The Director of Buildings and Grounds oversees the custodial staff and periodic checks are done by the Athletic Director to ensure that standards are being met with regard to athletics.

Area and Task Performed	Frequency
Weight Room:	
1. Swept and floor disinfected	Daily
2. Machines wiped down and disinfected	Monday, Wednesday, Friday
3. Disinfectant fogger	Friday
Trainers Room:	
1. Swept and floor disinfected	Daily
2. Floor scrubbed	Saturday or Sunday
3. Disinfectant fogger	Friday
Locker Rooms:	
1. Swept and floors disinfected	Daily
2. Floor scrubbed	Between athletic sessions
3. Disinfectant fogger	Friday
Auxiliary Gym:	
1. Wrestling mats swept and disinfected	Before and after practices and matches
2. Area outside mats swept and disinfected	Before and after practices
3. Disinfectant fogger	Friday
Chairs in Gymnasium:	
1. Wiped down and disinfected	Before and after each use
Pool:	
1. Deck swept and disinfected	Daily

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)

