

What is MRSA?

West Chester Henderson High School

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MRSA stands for methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Staphylococcal or “staph” bacteria are often found on the skin or in the noses of healthy people and do not usually cause illness. There are strains of staph bacteria that have become resistant to certain antibiotics, making them more difficult to treat. Anyone can get MRSA skin infections. They are more common among hospital patients and people in long term care facilities like nursing homes and prisons. Unfortunately, antibiotic-resistant infections are becoming more common in the athletic community.

Symptoms

MRSA skin infections are generally minor, such as pimples, boils and other skin conditions. They can often be mistaken for spider bites. Left untreated, these infections can get worse. The infection could spread to the bloodstream or lungs, causing serious illness and possibly death. If you suspect a MRSA skin infection, you should seek medical attention.

Reducing the Risk

If you think you may have a staph skin infection, see the Henderson Athletic Training Staff right away. They can tell you how you can best protect yourself and others from this infection. Take the following steps to prevent the spread of antibiotic-resistant staph skin infections to others:

- Cover skin infections with clean bandages. Pus and drainage from the infection can easily spread to others. Wear clothing that covers the infected area.
- Wash your hands! Wash hands with soap and water frequently throughout the day, especially after touching the wound or changing bandages. Soap does **not** need to be “antibacterial” soap.
- Do not share personal items such as helmets, pads, mouthpieces, clothing, towels, razors or bar soap with others.
- Clean your locker, bathroom and personal care items frequently.
- Wash equipment, pads, uniforms, towels, bedding and clothing in hot water and bleach (if possible). Dry these items in a hot air dryer to help kill the bacteria.
- Tell the Athletic Training Staff if you have a history of MRSA skin infections.
- **For more information talk to the HHS Athletic Training staff or visit: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html**