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California Interscholastic Federation

SPORTS MEDICINE ALERT

*Prepared by the State CIF Sports Medicine Committee
for distribution to Student-Athletes, Coaches and Parents*

MRSA

MRSA (methicillin-resistant staph aureus) is a type of staph infection that is resistant to many common antibiotics and, in cases where treatment is needed, can be very difficult to treat. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics, but occasionally serious infections require treatment. In the last few years, there have been a number of cases where these bacteria have spread among members of sports teams. Recently, this issue is making headlines as MRSA can have serious and deadly ramifications if not dealt with immediately.

WARNING SIGNS

It is common for athletes to have pimples, cuts and abrasions on their skin. Here are a few warning signs to look for and ask about when deciding whether a wound requires medical attention.

- **Unusual or increasing pain and/or warmth**
- **The presence of pus or a pustule**
- **Induration (hardness)**
- **Increasing swelling, size or redness of the wound**
- **Red streaks around the wound**
- **Fever and/or chills (flu-like symptoms)**

If you have any of these signs or symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.



Preventing MRSA

Here are some precautions for preventing the spread of MRSA

- Shower with soap as soon as possible after practices and competitions. If MRSA bacteria are present on your skin, you can wash them away before they have a chance to cause infection.
- Don't share towels, razors, soap or other personal items.
- Cover all wounds to help prevent infection, especially during practice and competition. If a bandage or wrapping falls off, replace it immediately.
- Get every skin wound, no matter how minor checked out by you coach, athletic trainer, parent/guardian or team physician.
- Dry out your equipment and padding after each use. Wash your clothes daily.
- Do not store uniforms and equipment in a dark, moist, warm environment. Keep your locker clean and dry.
- Wash your hands often. Frequent hand washing with soap for at least 15 seconds is one of the best ways to prevent MRSA.



For more information go to www.cifstate.org and click on the 'Health and Safety' box at the top of the page. Open the Sports Medicine Handbook and refer to page 44 for practical health hygiene policies and recommendations.