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In addition to the competitive spirit and collegiality of team sports, players often share something else as well contagious skin infection such as MRSA.

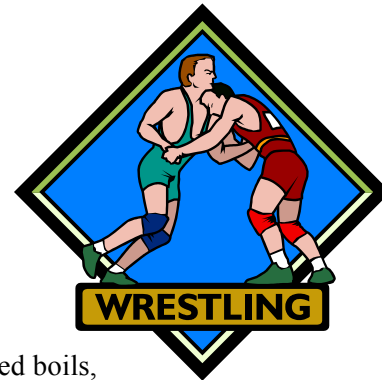
MRSA FACTS

What is a MRSA Infection?

Staphylococcus aureus (“Staph”) is a bacterium often carried on healthy skin or in the nose. It does not usually cause a problem. However, when staph enters the body through a cut, scrape or other break in the skin, it may cause an infection. This common infection is usually treated with antibiotics and proper wound care. Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is resistant to common antibiotics, such as methicillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. MRSA is a type of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat, but is otherwise the same.

How is MRSA spread?

Staph, including MRSA, is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. Staph is also spread by contact with shared items or surfaces with someone with a staph infection (e.g., towels, razors, used bandages, shared athletic equipment).



What are the symptoms of a MRSA infection?

MRSA is a type of staph, so the symptoms of a MRSA infection and the symptoms of a staph infection are often the same. Pimples, rashes, pus-filled boils, especially when warm, painful, red or swollen, can indicate a staph skin infection. It may look like a spider bite. MRSA can only be diagnosed by culture and laboratory testing. The infection can become a more serious infection of the bloodstream or to pneumonia. *However, this is very rare in healthy people.*

How is a MRSA infection treated?

Most MRSA infections are treated by good wound and skin care: keeping the area clean and dry, washing hands after caring for the area, carefully disposing of any bandages, and allowing the body to heal. Sometimes treatment requires the use of antibiotics.



How can MRSA infections be prevented?

Know the signs of MRSA skin infections and get treated early. Practice good hygiene. Wash hands frequently and other exposed skin with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and shower immediately after participating in exercise. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a clean dry bandage until healed. Avoid sharing personal items that come into contact with your bare skin. Use a barrier such as clothing or towel between your skin and the skin of others and shared equipment such as weight-training benches. Maintain a clean environment by establishing procedures for frequently touched surfaces and areas that come into direct contact with people’s skin. A solution of one to ten dilution of household bleach and water is recommended.

What should you do about a significant exposure to a MRSA infected person?

As soon as possible, wash the area well with soap and water. Contact your health care provider for additional guidance.



Sources: CDC, Mayo Clinic