



Human Services

Community Health

David C. Damsker, MD, MPH
Medical Director
919-250-4549
Fax 919-250-3984
10 Sunnybrook Rd. #307
Raleigh, NC 27610

www.wakegov.com

August 2007

Dear Parents of Athletes:

This letter is being sent to you to make you aware of an infection called Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureas (MRSA) that can be found among school athletes.

MRSA is an infection of the skin caused by a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to some of the antibiotics usually used to treat common staph infections. The bacteria can live on objects such as towels, sports equipment or personal hygiene products. MRSA infections may occur when the bacteria gets into an open cut or wound, usually coming from either a contaminated object or direct physical contact with MRSA on another person.

It is important for you to be aware of this infection so that you can help in the effort to prevent its spread among athletes. MRSA is usually a mild infection which can be treated successfully with proper skin care and antibiotics prescribed by a physician. In rare cases, without proper treatment, MRSA can progress to a very serious blood or bone infection that can be difficult to treat due to the lack of effective antibiotic treatment.

To help prevent this infection, athletes should:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds.
- Shower with soap after each practice or game.
- Never share personal hygiene items (like razors, towels, washcloths), clothing or uniforms.
- Cover open sores on the skin while participating in contact sports.
- Wash uniforms often.
- Wipe down non-washable gear (i.e. head protectors) with alcohol.
- Report any suspicious sores, pimples or open areas to parents, coach, trainer or the school nurse.

You can help by reminding your child of the importance of the prevention methods listed above and by contacting your child's doctor about any suspicious sores. Doctors need to treat MRSA with very specific antibiotics, not the usual antibiotics used to treat common staph infections. Your doctor can contact a Dermatologist or Infectious Disease physician if they have questions about treatment.

Thank you for your help in preventing MRSA.