

Karns City Sports Medicine - Communicable Disease and Skin Infection Procedures

Most cases of skin infections are mild and treatable, but without proper treatment, certain skin infections can be very serious. Therefore, anyone participating in organized or recreational sports should be aware of the signs of possible skin infections and follow preventative measures especially considering the emergence of the potentially more serious infection with Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).

1. Athletes are encouraged to notify the athletic trainer, coach, nurse or parent if they think they have an infection so that it can be treated quickly thus decreasing the chance that the infection becomes more severe.
 - ✓ *pay attention for signs of infection such as redness, warmth, swelling, pus and pain at sites where your skin has sores, abrasions, or cuts. Sometimes these infections can be mistaken for spider bites.*
 - ✓ *Infections can also occur at sites covered by body hair or where uniforms or equipment Cause skin irritation or increased rubbing.*
2. Do not try to treat the infection yourself or by picking or popping the sore.
3. Cover possible infection sites with clean, dry bandages / dressings until you can be evaluated by a healthcare provider (e.g., physician, athletic trainer, school nurse)
4. Practice good personal hygiene. Keep hands clean by washing frequently with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
5. Shower immediately after exercise and do not share bar soap or towels.
6. Cover all wounds. Keep wounds covered with clean, dry dressings until healed. Follow instructions on proper wound care. Pus from infected wounds can contain MRSA so keeping the infection site covered will help prevent the spread to others.
7. Do not share personal items. Personal items include towels, washcloths, razors, clothing and uniforms.
8. Wash all athletic clothing worn during practice or competition daily. Drying clothes completely in a Dryer is preferred.
9. Clean and disinfect gym bags or travel bags if the athlete is carrying dirty workout gear home to be Washed and then bringing clean gear back to school in the same bag.
10. Clean and disinfect protective equipment such as helmets, shoulder pads, catcher's equipment, elbow and knee pads on a regular basis and hang to dry.
11. Locker rooms, weight room equipment should be cleaned and sanitized daily.
12. Take care of your skin.
 - ✓ *Wear protective clothing or gear designed to prevent skin abrasions or cuts.*
 - ✓ *Cover skin abrasions and cuts with clean bandages or other dressings recommended by the Physician, athletic trainer or school nurse until healed.*
13. All skin lesions that do not respond to initial therapy should be referred to a physician for evaluation and diagnosis (preferably by obtaining bacterial cultures) and treatment.
14. All skin lesions must be cared for and properly covered appropriately before athletic participation.

(Sources: National Athletic Trainers Association, Centers for Disease control and Prevention, National Federation of High Schools)