Best Practices for Preventing Skin Infections

Types of skin infections:

**Bacterial skin infections:** Caused by “Strep” or “Staph”  
**Examples:** Impetigo and MRSA  
**Symptoms:** redness, swelling, pain, or pus

**Viral skin infections:** Caused by Herpes Simplex Virus Type-1 (HSV-1)  
**Examples:** Herpes Gladitorium (Mat Herpes)  
**Symptoms:** fever, swollen glands, blisters surrounded by redness

**Fungal skin infections:** Caused by a dermatophyte  
**Examples:** Ringworm (Tinea)  
**Symptoms:** itchy red raised scaly patches, sores in the shape of a ring or circle, redness around the outside, bald patches on the scalp, infected nails can be discolored, thick, and crumble

What should athletes do if they have a rash or skin infection?  
- Tell parent or guardian, coach, and/or school nurse  
- Have medical personnel diagnose and prescribe appropriate treatment  
- Do not practice or compete until cleared by the Chief School Medical Officer.  
- Do not cover the affected area and continue to practice or compete

How can coaches and trainers prevent the spread of skin infections?  
- Examine athletes before each practice and competition for and skin irregularities  
- Know and use proper hand washing hygiene, teach these techniques to all of your student-athletes  
- Educate student-athletes on appropriate wound management  
- Provide enough clean towels so that student-athletes do not have to share

What can student-athletes do to prevent skin infections?  
- Report any skin lesions or sores to the appropriate adults  
- Have rashes or sores examined by appropriate health care provider  
- Wash hands, towels, uniforms, and clothing frequently  
- Shower before and after practice  
- Do not share deodorant, lotions, ointments, gels, or creams

What can schools do to prevent skin infections?  
- Environmental surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis  
- Repair or discard equipment with damaged surfaces  
- Cover treatment tables  
- Wash towels and clothing with laundry detergent and hot water (min 160 degrees)
Sources:

NYSDOH:
- Health Advisory: Prevention of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) Infections in the School Setting:
  http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/staphylococcus_aureus/methicillin_resistant/community_associated/health_advisory_2008-12-09.htm

CDC:
- Group A Streptococcal (GAS) Disease (includes impetigo):
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/groupastreptococcal_g.htm
- Community Associated MRSA (CA-MRSA) Information for the Public:
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html
- National MRSA Education Initiative: Preventing MRSA Skin Infections:
  http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/
- Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) among Athletes:
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_MRSA_AthletesFAQ.html
- Environmental Management of Staph and MRSA in Community Settings:
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_Enviro_Manage.html
- Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) - Epidemiologic Notes and Reports Herpes Gladiatorum at a High School Wrestling Camp—Minnesota:
  http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001552.htm
- Dermatophytes (Ringworm):
  http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/dermatophytes/
- Ringworm and Animals: http://198.246.98.21/healthypets/diseases/ringworm.htm

MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine [NLM] and the National Institutes of Health [NIH]):

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID):

US Food and Drug Administration (FDA):
- New Ointment Treats Impetigo:
  http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm048859.pdf

Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) Health Department (ACHD):
- Mat Herpes: A Fact Sheet: http://www.achd.net/factsheet/mat.html

Mayo Clinic:
- Contact Dermatitis: http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/contact-dermatitis/DS00985
  Impetigo: http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/impetigo/DS00464