

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 Gladiatorum (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]):

- Impetigo: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/impetigo.html>
- Herpes Simplex: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/herpessimplex.html> and <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001324.htm>
- Ringworm: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001439.htm>

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID):

- Impetigo: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/impetigo/pages/default.aspx>

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>