

October 19, 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Since 2000, the number of healthy adults and children with MRSA (methicillin-resistant *S. aureus*) bacterial infections has steadily increased. Many of these people have had mild skin infections, such as abscesses, boils, impetigo, and rashes. As with any communicable disease, school children have a slightly increased risk, due to close contact with other students. We have only had a few isolated cases in our schools but want to make parents aware of this infectious disease and how you can best prevent becoming infected.

MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact and not through the air. Transmission of MRSA may also occur through indirect contact by touching objects, such as towels, clothes, bandages, or sports equipment contaminated by the infected skin of a person with the bacteria. If you are aware of your child having MRSA, please inform the school, so that appropriate measures can be taken to protect others from the infection.

Parents, athletes, and school personnel can help prevent and control MRSA infections within the athletic setting by following these simple health and hygiene practices:

1. Wash hands frequently with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand cleaner, especially after using any sports equipment or facilities.
2. Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels washcloths, razors, clothing, razors or uniforms).
3. Report any suspicious skin sore or boil to your healthcare provider and school nurse immediately. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
4. If you participate in sports involving close personal contact (e.g. wrestling and football) shower with soap immediately after each practice, game or match.
5. Non-washable gear (e.g. head protectors) should be wiped down with alcohol after each use.
6. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.

Infections may affect healthy people and healthy skin. Usually, these infections are easily treated. Any activity that promotes a breakdown in the skin (e.g., chronic skin infections or physical trauma) can promote infections including those caused by MRSA.

If you have questions or concerns, please talk with your family physician or call your school nurse.

Sincerely,

Lynn Stoelting R.N.B.S.N.  
Clay Community Schools