

**Thomas Jefferson Health District**  
**Talking Points on Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) Infections**

- *Staphylococcus aureus* ('staph') is a very common bacterium that can live in people's noses or on their skin. It is a common cause of skin lesions, including pimples and boils, and can sometimes lead to more serious infections in the skin or other body sites.
- Some Staph infections are harder to treat because the bacterium has become resistant to antibiotics typically used to treat these infections. These resistant infections may be referred to as MRSA, or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- In the past, MRSA infections were mostly seen in hospitals. Now they are prevalent in community settings, too. Because the occurrence of these infections in community settings is relatively new, some people become alarmed when they hear about them.
- The key measures that can be taken to prevent MRSA infections are to practice good hand washing and good wound care. In addition, avoid sharing razors, towels, or other objects that could pass bacteria from one person's skin to another's.
- If you think you have an infected wound, you should see a medical care provider. MRSA can be diagnosed only through a laboratory test.
- MRSA infections can be treated. Treatment depends on the site and severity of the infection. Not all infections require oral antibiotics.
- MRSA is preventable and treatable.

**Control of MRSA in Athletic Teams**

- All draining wounds must be covered with clean, dry bandages during practices and games. Bandages should be disposed of properly. If the draining cannot be contained, the player should be excused from activities.
- Hands should be washed before eating and after toileting, coughing, changing bandages, and after practices or exercising. Soap and water should be used. If they are not available and hands are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used.
- Disinfect mats, benches, and other surfaces that might have skin contact after each game or practice or when they become contaminated and disinfect equipment after use with bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) or an EPA-registered cleaner.
- Do not allow sharing of any personal equipment, uniforms, or towels. Assign equipment and uniforms to one individual for the whole season. Wash uniforms and towels after each use with detergent in hot water.
- Keep track of skin lesions among team members. Be on the lookout for draining wounds and encourage people with such wounds to seek medical care.
- For further guidance, please call the Thomas Jefferson Health District at 434-972-6219.