



## COMMUNITY ASSOCIATED MRSA (CA-MRSA) Athlete's Guide for Control and Prevention

**What is *Staphylococcus aureus*?** *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*) is a bacteria commonly found on the skin and in the nose of 20-30% of healthy individuals. This bacteria often causes skin infections; however, it can also cause more serious infections such as pneumonia or bloodstream infections.

**What is MRSA?** Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a strain of *S. aureus* that is resistant to methicillin, an antibiotic in the same class as penicillin. MRSA is traditionally seen in people recently hospitalized or who have been treated at a healthcare facility (such as a dialysis center).

**What is Community Associated MRSA (CA-MRSA)?** CA-MRSA infections have been documented among athletes, prisoners, military recruits, daycare attendees, injection drug users and others who live in crowded settings or routinely share contaminated items.

**What does a CA-MRSA skin infection look like?** A skin infection with CA-MRSA can begin as a reddened area on the skin, or resemble a pimple that can develop into a skin abscess or boil causing fever, pus, swelling or pain. Antibiotics can be administered as necessary. These infections can become serious and more difficult to treat if not cared for properly and promptly. It is also possible for a pre-existing cut, turf burn or other irritated area on the skin to develop an infection with CA-MRSA if the area is not kept clean and dry.



Hardin MD/University of Iowa and CDC  
<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/Hardin/md/cdc/staph/mrsa3.html>

**How can athletes prevent CA-MRSA skin infections?** The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified CA-MRSA as an emerging problem for athletic participants. In order to prevent the transmission of CR-MRSA, here are some recommendations:

- ✚ Practice good hygiene; shower with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizers
- ✚ Do not share towels, clothing, razors, equipment or any other personal items
- ✚ Assess skin condition regularly
- ✚ Avoid contact with other people's wounds and bandages
- ✚ Properly clean all wounds, cuts and scrapes and exercise appropriate first aid
- ✚ Keep wounds, cuts and scrapes covered with bandages
- ✚ Seek advice from school personnel or family member if you have a concern
- ✚ Disinfect sports equipment
- ✚ Seek medical care if you suspect CA-MRSA

Additional information about CA-MRSA can be obtained at the following websites: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.edcp.org](http://www.edcp.org), [www.co.frederick.md.us/HealthDept](http://www.co.frederick.md.us/HealthDept). Some of this information has been adapted from the New York State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services.