

Students

Exhibit - Prevention of Staphylococcal Infections for Schools

The following includes excerpts from *Recommendations for the Prevention of Staphylococcal Infections for Schools*, *Basic Hygiene Guidelines for the Prevention of Staphylococcal Infections in Schools*, and *Guidance for School and Student Athletes About Community-Associated Staphylococcus Aureus (CA-MSA0 Infections)*, Ill. Dept. of Public Health (IDPH):

www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/schoolstaphrecs.htm.

www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/hygiene.htm.

www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/MRSA_School_Recs.htm.

This exhibit may be reformatted and distributed to students and their parents/guardians, faculty, and staff to inform them about what staphylococcus aureus is, how it spreads, and how staph infections can be prevented.

Education/Increased Awareness

Staphylococcus aureus, often referred to as *staph*, are bacteria commonly found on the skin or in the noses of healthy people. On occasion, staph bacteria can cause much more serious skin infections, such as bloodstream infections or pneumonia.

Treatment of some staph infections has become more problematic in recent years because the bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of staph that is resistant to some antibiotics, including the antibiotic methicillin. CA-MRSA can be transmitted from person to person through close contact. Recently, the IDPH has received increasing reports of both outbreaks and sporadic cases of CA-MRSA infections.

Knowledge regarding precautions and preventive measures related to CA-MRSA is prudent practice. Transmission of MRSA skin and soft tissue infections among students and those who participate in competitive sports is a significant concern. All persons, especially coaches, athletic trainers, parents/guardians, and teammates, associated with the school's competitive sport activities and sport teams should engage in initiatives to increase adherence to Board policy, 7:280, [Communicable and Chronic Infectious Disease](#), and procedures designed to prevent transmission of MRSA skin infections, and awareness of risk factors for infections.

All students, athletes, and their parents/guardians should also be aware of the possible risk factors for MRSA skin and soft tissue infection especially occurring among athletes:

- Physical contact/skin trauma
- Turf burns (football players)
- Contact with teammates' uncovered skin lesions
- Sharing protective equipment, clothing, or towels
- Sharing sports equipment
- Sharing personal hygiene items
- Reuse of unlaundered towels, clothing, uniforms, etc.
- Inadequate supply of dispensable or individual-use soap
- Cosmetic body shaving
- Poor personal hygiene practices, including infrequent hand washing
- Poor cleaning of locker rooms/sport rooms

In addition, since staph infections start when staph bacteria enter the body through a break in the skin, keeping skin healthy and intact is a good preventive measure. Good skin care should be encouraged among students and athletes.

Basic Hygiene Guidelines

Hand Hygiene

Students, faculty, and staff should be instructed about the correct technique for hand washing, including the importance of washing hands before eating or preparing food, after touching any skin lesions (sores) and wounds or clothing contaminated by drainage from lesions and wounds, and after using the toilet. Instructions should include the following:

- Turn on faucet and wet hands with running water.
- Apply soap and spread across all surfaces of hands.
- Scrub all surfaces of hands, including between each finger, for at least 20 seconds (saying the alphabet slowly will take at least 20 seconds).
- Rinse hands under running water.
- Dry hands with paper towels or air dryers.
- If available, use a paper towel to turn off faucet handles.

Hygiene

Students, faculty, and staff should be provided information about general hygienic measures, including the following:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water. Use an alcohol hand gel when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid sharing eating and drinking utensils.
- Avoid sharing unwashed towels, washcloths, clothing, or uniforms.
- Avoid sharing personal items, e.g., deodorant, razors.
- Change socks and underwear daily.
- Wash bed linens and pajamas regularly, at least once a week if feasible.
- Wash soiled bed linens and clothes with hot water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria in clothes.
- Bathe or shower with soap each day.
- Bathe or shower with soap after every sports practice or competition.
- Keep cuts and abrasions clean and covered with clean, dry bandages until healed.
- Follow your health care provider's instructions on proper care of wounds.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or material contaminated by wounds.

Hygiene for Sports Participants

In addition to the previously mentioned recommendations, sports participants should be provided these recommendations:

- Do not share towels, clothing, or uniforms.
- Do not store wet, dirty clothing in lockers.
- Avoid sharing personal equipment.
- Keep equipment clean. Follow coach's directions about cleaning the equipment.
- Keep cuts, abrasions, and wounds covered with clean, dry bandages. Persons with draining wounds or infections are not allowed to participate in practices or games until the wound has stopped draining.
- Report any cuts, abrasions, or wounds to the coach and school nurse.

See also: <http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa>

The local health department may have more information specific to the District's jurisdiction.

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