



Disinfect Sporting Equipment to Help Score a Victory against MRSA this Season

Skin infections like those caused by MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), which spread through contact with equipment and other shared items, are the cause of 56% of all outbreaks of infectious diseases in competitive sports in the U.S.^{1,2} The spread of MRSA into youth athletic settings raises the need for education and information about practical ways to help reduce the spread of the infection. The following steps can help prevent the spread:

SPORTS EQUIPMENT TIPS

- **Wipe it down** – Use a disinfecting bleach solution to wipe down and disinfect equipment and other hard surfaces. Make sure to use clean cloths to avoid spreading MRSA from one surface to another. (1 tablespoon of disinfecting bleach diluted in 1 gallon of water or as directed on product label).
- **Make a routine for clean** – Regularly clean or disinfect sports equipment like balls, racket grips, bats with a disinfecting bleach solution (1 tablespoon of disinfecting bleach diluted in 1 gallon of water, or as directed). Locker rooms and shower areas should be cleaned daily.
- **Don't wrap it up** – Avoid using tape to wrap gripping areas of rackets, bar bells, or to repair rips and tears on other sports equipment. This may provide an environment for germs to thrive and may interfere with the disinfectant process.
- **Don't weight around** – Ensure that your kid's sports centers wipe down grips on weights and lifting belts, clean floors, benches, supports, pads, light switches and door knobs at least daily.⁴
- **Wrestle it out** – Make sure mats and other high-use equipment are cleaned using a disinfecting bleach solution before each practice and several times a day throughout a tournament.⁴
- **Watch close contact spots** – Pay particular attention to disinfecting as well as properly laundering or cleaning sports equipment that comes into direct contact with the player's skin, such as headgear/helmets, mats, and body armor.^{3,4}

Clean or Disinfect With Bleach Solution

Baseballs, Footballs, Softballs, Volleyballs, Bats, Racket Grips, Head Gear, Helmets, Wrestling Mats, Weight Grips, Lifting Belts and Lacrosse Sticks

PERSONAL CARE TIPS

- **Scrub up** – Make sure kids wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds - the time it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice - or use an alcohol-based hand rub sanitizer. Have them shower with soap and water immediately after direct contact sports and use a clean, dry towel.
- **Cover your cuts** – Keep kids' nicks or wounds covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed.
- **Keep to yourself** – Talk to your kids about sharing the glory on the field, but keeping personal items, like towels or razors, to themselves.
- **Use a barrier** – Keep a towel or clothing between skin and shared equipment.
- **Don't play dirty** – Wash children's athletic clothing after each use. Use the warmest wash recommended on the care label (the hotter the water, the better the cleaning), the recommended amount of detergent and consider adding the appropriate bleach. Items that can be bleached should be bleached.³
- **Stay alert** – Check that coaches are trained in first aid for wounds and recognition of wounds that are potentially infected. Also encourage coaches to assess kids regularly for skin lesions.

Laundering For Sports

Pads, Body Armor, Gloves, Uniforms, Scrimmage Shirts, Athletic Clothing and Game Towels

For more information, visit www.stopmrsanow.org

¹ Turbeville, S.D., Infectious Disease Outbreaks in Competitive Sports. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*. 2006; 34(11):1860-5.

² Zinder, S.Z., National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Skin Diseases. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 2010;45(4):411-428.

³ <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/documents/camsainfectionsguidelineathleticsdepartment.pdf>

⁴ http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/DAE9D31C-E9C5-4038-8406-E6B41F70A716/134186/MRSAGuidelinesFinal2_Nov14.doc

⁵ <http://momsteam.com/sports/football-tackle/safetygood-personal-hygiene-key-to-preventing-spread-of-mrsa-experts-say?page=0%2C0>

