

# IN THE NEWS *by* RD FILIP, INC.

RD FILIP, INC. – Kokomo, IN – 765.459.0311 – 800.686.5115 – [www.rdfilip.com](http://www.rdfilip.com)

**MRSA (methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus)** is a dangerous superbug which has been the direct cause of several deaths and severe infections across the globe. It is especially prevalent in the United States. In fact, a 17 year Virginia football player recently passed, causing students and faculty across the country to demand better cleaning standards in their schools. At first, the MRSA outbreaks were confined to hospitals and long care facilities but now they have become quite prevalent in school athletics, where the spread of infection is increased due to direct contact. The following is a short overview of the background of the infection, prevention techniques, and care strategies for infected individuals. Please use this information with your end users to develop a strategy to minimize the occurrence or impact of an MRSA outbreak. Also please visit the suggested websites at the end of the article for more information.

## **Background**

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is present in about 25-30 percent of the population. For most, the bacterium does not cause illness. When infections do occur, it is usually through direct contact with a break in the skin or contact with inanimate objects, clothing, bed linens or furniture, of an infected person. In the past, these infections could be treated easily with a short inexpensive course of penicillin or other well-known antibiotics. Unfortunately today, many of these staphylococci are now resistant to penicillin and other common antibiotics. These MRSA infections (methicillin is a type of penicillin) require longer, more expensive and more complicated treatment. Recurrence of the infections occurs frequently within these patients.

## **How MRSA is Spread**

Because staphylococcus aureus bacteria live on the skin they are easily spread by direct skin contact, often on people's hands. MRSA is also spread on bedding, towels, clothing and equipment. MRSA can survive on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours and can persist on the skin for several hours waiting to enter the bloodstream through a cut or abrasion. That is why a proper cleaning program supplemented with an effective hand washing program is essential to prevent and control the spread of MRSA.

## **Prevention**

A proper hand washing program is the most important behavior in preventing infectious diseases. Emphasize this fact with students, faculty, and especially athletes, coaches and trainers. Hands must be clean before touching eyes, mouth, nose or any cuts or scrapes on the skin. If soap and water is not present, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Do not share a towel, soap, or other personal care items. Pre-wash or rinse items that have been contaminated with bodily fluids. Wash towels and uniforms in HOT water with ordinary detergent and dry on the HOTTEST cycle. Inform parents of the above laundering techniques if items are sent home. Clean the athletic area or equipment using a disinfectant cleaner that has demonstrated efficacy against MRSA. The following products meet this criteria:

Visit [http://www.rdfilip.com/MRSA\\_bulletin.html](http://www.rdfilip.com/MRSA_bulletin.html) for the following products.

Fight Bac RTU – Broad Spectrum RTU Disinfectant Cleaner

pH7Q - Neutral Disinfectant Cleaner

pH7Q Ultra - Neutral Disinfectant Cleaner

AF79 Concentrate – Restroom Disinfectant Cleaner

Green Earth® Daily Disinfectant Cleaner – Green Neutral Disinfectant Cleaner

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Institute a policy where athletes must inform the training staff of any skin infections and the athlete cannot participate in contact activities until the trainer has approved their return. Have athletes and parents sign the policy.

## Care Strategies

1. Consider the wound infected if there is any purulent drainage (pus). Treat any draining wound as a potential MRSA infection.
2. Separate the infected athlete from the other athletes and make sure they see a physician. The wound must remain covered and dressings changed at least twice a day. Wash hands frequently when changing dressings or bandages. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages whenever possible.
3. Disinfect areas that may come in direct contact with infection with products that meet the requirements of OSHA's Bloodborne pathogen standard. The following products meet this criteria:

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4. Separate laundry that come in contact with a wound and wash in hot water and dry on hottest setting.
5. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

## Additional Resources

Please visit the following websites for more information on MRSA:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSA/>

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca\\_public.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html)

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mrsa/DS00735>

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_spotlight\\_2006.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_spotlight_2006.html) - *Healthcare Specific*