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Table 7. Recommendations to prevent MRSA in Athletes

Hand Washing/ Personal Hygiene

Skin-to-skin contact is the primary mode of transmission, thus personal hygiene is very important.

1. Keep hands clean. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water or cleansed with an alcohol-based sanitizer.
2. Showering after each practice or sports event is imperative.
3. Do not share washcloths or bar soap.
4. A liquid antibacterial soap is recommended during outbreaks.
5. Do not use a standing basin of water to rinse.
6. Do not share towels or any other toilet articles such as razors.
7. Each athlete should have his /her own washcloths, towels and bar soap (if used).
8. Liquid soap should never have more soap added to the container. The container should be used until empty and discarded. A reusable container is not recommended since it may not be cleaned properly between refills.
9. Athletes should not walk around barefoot. Wear flip-flops in the gym showers.
10. Towels and washcloths should be only used once.

Care of Clothing

1. Do not share uniforms, underclothes, socks or athletic supports.
2. Each athlete should have an adequate supply of uniforms, socks, athletic supports, and underclothes so that proper laundering can be accomplished.
3. All personal clothing should be laundered after wearing once.
4. The used clothing should be placed in individual laundry bags assigned to each player. The laundry bag should be laundered after each use.
5. If the laundering is done at the team site, the following should be considered:
 - A. The washing machine should not be overloaded.
 - B. Consider the 1) mechanical action of the machine, 2) water flow, 3) water temperature, 4) time and 5) chemicals used.
 - C. Sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) is the disinfectant of choice for clothing. If the clothing is made of polyester/cotton, chlorine alternatives may be used. However, bleach is the optimal choice if the fabric allows.
 - D. Clothes can be washed with regular detergent.
 - E. Dry clothes in a hot temperature dryer as opposed to air-drying.
6. Hands should be washed after handling soiled clothes.

Wound Care/Antibiotic Use

1. Cover a wound with a clean dry dressing so that any drainage is contained.
2. Use clothes or towels as a barrier between your skin and equipment.
3. Cover scrapes/cuts with a clean dressing until healed.
4. Avoid contact with another person's wound or dressing.
5. Wound dressings can be placed in the regular trash.
6. Wash hands after each dressing change.

7. A physician should drain abscesses and obtain a culture.
8. Do not use antibiotics until the culture is taken and results are known.
9. Do not share antibiotics.
10. Take the antibiotic as prescribed. Do not hoard or self-medicate.
11. Place used dressings in a disposable plastic bag, tie, and discard.
7. Culture the player's nares if an outbreak occurs and treat the carriers with mupirocin.

Athlete Education

1. Infected individuals should receive hand washing and other personal hygiene instructions as related to transmission between players. Skin-to-skin contact is the mode of transmission.
2. Use of antibiotics should be reviewed with the athlete if it is prescribed.
3. Trainers and players should be educated concerning MRSA transmission and prevention.
4. The health department should be notified if MRSA infections occur (if required in that state).

Environmental Cleaning

1. Use disposable cleaning cloths and mop heads.
2. Avoid use of sponges to clean; they harbor organisms.
3. Clean and disinfect all exercise equipment before and after use according to the manufacturer's recommended guidelines.
4. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned daily or more often if indicated.
5. Floors and showers should be cleaned daily or after use.
6. Player lockers should be cleaned on a routine basis and before assigning to a new player.