



***In light of recent information and concern about reported occurrences of MRSA, or methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus, the following are basic facts as well as simple preventative measures:***

- MRSA refers to a type of bacteria that is resistant to most antibiotics. It is commonly found in hospitalized patients and is usually transmitted through direct contact with the hands of a health care worker or patient who is infected. CA-MRSA refers to community-associated MRSA – infections in healthy people who have not been hospitalized within the past year.
- Anyone can contract CA-MRSA; however, most outbreaks have been observed among athletes, military recruits, daycare attendees or anyone else who routinely shares crowded settings and contaminated items.
- CA-MRSA infections typically begin as skin infections. They first appear as reddened areas on the skin that can resemble pimples that develop into skin abscesses or boils causing fever, pus, swelling or pain.
- CA-MRSA is spread mainly through person-to-person contact or contact with a contaminated item such as a towel, clothing or athletic equipment.
- If basic hygiene precautions are followed, MRSA carriers are *not* a hazard to others including their family and friends.
- ***CAREFUL HANDWASHING*** is the single most effective way to control the spread of CA-MRSA. Skin infections caused by MRSA should be covered until healed, especially to avoid spreading the infection to others.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have issued recommendations for preventing the spread of CA-MRSA.
- Preventive measures for the transmittal of disease include:
  - Washing hands often or using a hand-sanitizer;
  - Keeping any cuts and scrapes clean and covered with bandages.
  - Not sharing personal items such as towels, cups or utensils;
  - Showering after athletic practices or competitions.

***Further information about preventing the spread of MRSA can be found on the CDC's website or by calling the Orange County Health Department.***