

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATED METHICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (CA MRSA) GUIDELINES FOR CONTROL OF TRANSMISSION

One of the most important ways to protect against infections with CA MRSA is to keep skin intact. Using protective gloves and clothing when performing activities likely to cause punctures, scratches, cuts, abrasions, or other injuries to the skin will help prevent CA MRSA from causing skin and soft tissue infections. If injury to the skin does occur, the wound should be cleaned immediately with soap and warm water, dried, and then covered with a clean, dry bandage or dressing.

Other important strategies to prevent transmission of MRSA are hand washing, adequately containing wound drainage and infected body fluids with bandages or dressings, and cleaning and disinfecting contaminated items and environmental surfaces.

THE FOLLOWING ARE GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL HYGIENE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS IN CERTAIN COMMUNITY SETTINGS



GYMNASIUMS

1. Wash hands upon entering and before leaving the premises. Alcohol gel may be used as an effective and convenient alternative to soap and water. If hands are visibly soiled, however, soap and water should be used.
2. Facilities should provide liquid soap dispensers instead of bar soaps for hand washing.
3. Use air blowers or disposable paper towels to dry hands rather than shared cloth towels.
4. Patrons should consider using clothing with long sleeves and long pants to protect skin from abrasions, cuts, and sores during activities that are likely to cause skin damage.
5. Areas of skin lesions or open sores should be covered with clean, dry dressings or bandages before using gymnasiums.
6. Persons with skin lesions, open sores, or wounds with drainage that cannot be contained should not participate in activities that may contaminate surfaces and equipment.
7. Personal items such as towels, clothing, bar soap, razors, or clippers should not be shared.
8. Patrons are encouraged to shower at the end of activities.
9. Use a towel or wear clothing that acts as a barrier between skin and exercise equipment such as exercise machines and massage tables.
10. Wipe surfaces of equipment before and after use. If necessary, ask staff for spray bottles of disinfectant and paper towels to be near each piece of equipment. to clean equipment surfaces.
11. Staff should clean shared equipment surfaces daily to remove soil, then disinfect with an EPA registered disinfectant according to manufacturer's instructions. They should check the disinfectant label to make sure it is suitable for the material being treated (e.g. vinyl, cloth, plastic, wood) and that it is effective against *S.aureus*. The disinfectant must remain on the surface of equipment for the recommended contact time to be effective.
12. Used linens and clothing such as sheets, blankets, and towels should be washed in detergent and water at $\geq 160^{\circ}$ F for at least 25 minutes. If lower washing temperatures are used, oxygenated laundry detergents formulated for low temperature washing or bleach should be used.
Use an automatic dryer on hot temperatures (180°F) to dry items—do not air dry. Items should be used only after they are completely dry.



SPORTS TEAMS

1. Team members should practice good hand hygiene by washing hands when entering and leaving locker rooms, weight rooms and other common sports activity rooms, and prior to participating in practice or competition. Alcohol hand sanitizers may be used instead of soap and water if hands are not visibly soiled.
2. Cover any open wounds or sores before participating in sports activities. Make sure bandages and dressings stay in place during activities.
3. Consider excluding players with potentially infectious skin lesions from sports activities until wounds are healed or can be adequately covered.
4. Participants in contact sports should be encouraged to shower with soap and warm water after practice and competition. If there are active infections of MRSA among team members, consider implementing antibacterial soap for showering.
5. Locker rooms should have adequate sinks, showers, and soap supplies to encourage good personal hygiene.
6. Sports participants should not share personal items such as towels and razors.
7. Uniforms and equipment should be routinely cleaned after each use. Items that can be laundered should be washed in detergent and water at $\geq 160^{\circ}\text{F}$ for at least 25 minutes. If lower washing temperatures are used, oxygenated laundry detergents formulated for low temperature washing or bleach should be used. Use an automatic dryer on hot temperature (180°F) for items that can withstand those temperatures. Items should be used only after they are completely dry.
8. Maintain clean locker rooms and shower areas with regularly scheduled cleaning procedures.
9. Athletes, trainers, and coaches should be trained to watch for wounds and skin lesions among team members, and to recommend athletes seek medical care if lesions appear infected.



SCHOOLS AND WORK SETTINGS

1. Hand hygiene should be facilitated by providing adequate hand washing facilities and supplies. Hand washing supplies should consist of soap dispensers rather than soap bars, and paper towels for single use instead of multiple use cloth towels. Use of alcohol hand sanitizers should be encouraged as a convenient alternative to use of soap and water, when hands are not visibly soiled.
2. Persons should wash hands after using rest rooms, before eating or drinking, after using tissue to cover sneezes or coughs, before and after use of gymnasium, weight rooms and other common sports activity areas and whenever hands are contaminated or soiled.
3. Cover areas of open wounds or sores when possible. Wound drainage should be contained with bandages or dressings.
4. Persons with uncontained wound drainage or other infected body fluids should be excluded from school or work until wound drainage or body fluids are able to be contained.
5. Items and surfaces contaminated with blood, other body fluids, or wound drainage should be cleaned promptly using established protocols.
6. Common areas in school and workplace settings (e.g. cafeterias, rest rooms, locker rooms, common work stations) should be kept clean by following regularly scheduled cleaning protocols.



AT HOME

1. Practice good hygiene, lots of hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed. Any break in the skin is a route for infection to enter the body. Invest in a variety of band-aids. Send your child out in the morning with all cuts covered. The band-aids can be taken off when kids get home.
3. Avoid sharing personal items such as washcloths, towels, razors, uniforms, etc. This is especially important to discuss with your teenage children. Wash sheets, towels and clothing and use a hot dryer rather than air-drying to kill bacteria.
4. Wash athletic uniforms in hot water after each use. Individuals in contact sports, including football and wrestling, have a greater risk for contracting MRSA. Clothing worn at PE should also be washed frequently.
5. While MRSA can be fatal, it most often is an easily treatable infection when treated promptly. Although the staph is resistant to the "cillin" category of antibiotics there are many other antibiotics which can treat the infection. Seek medical care promptly if a sore looks to be infected, has pus, is painful, swollen or spreading.
6. An individual with MRSA may be advised to shower with special anti-microbial soap. It may be recommended that family members wash their hands with this special soap as well.
7. Students with MRSA infections do not need to be excluded from school if they can adequately cover the infected area with a bandage. The routine cleaning done in most schools is sufficient to keep the community healthy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) WEBSITE: One helpful link is www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html