

Controlling Illness and Infections

As you may be aware, there has been considerable attention given to the drug resistant strain of staphylococcus (staph) known as MRSA. Staph is one of several health issues to which athletes, coaches and trainers must pay attention. Other health issues common in athletics are tinea pedis ("athlete's foot"), tinea cruris ("jock itch") and tinea corporis or tinea capitis ("ringworm"). We must take appropriate steps to prevent these health issues from preventing athletic participation. While our custodial staff, coaches and certified athletic trainers have been directed to address these health issues as part of their job responsibilities, there are also interventions that can be implemented by the athletes.

The key to controlling illness and infections is prevention.

Millard Public Schools health and athletic officials are recommending the following guidelines to athletes and their parents to help prevent illness and infections from affecting athletic participation. Efforts that athletes and parents can take may seem daunting, but these common sense precautions can help reduce the risk to athletes:

- ✓ ***Wash and dry all athletic clothing after each use.*** Clothing should be laundered in hot water with antiviral soaps or chlorine bleach.
- ✓ ***Do not use the same bag to transport dirty clothing used after practices and games that you use to bring clean clothing to school.*** The dirty clothing transported in the bag may contaminate the bag, which then might contaminate the clean clothing placed in that bag.
- ✓ ***Wash hands frequently with soap and water.*** Careful hand washing remains the best defense against germs. Scrub hands briskly for at least 15 seconds, and then dry them with a disposable towel.
- ✓ ***Do not share personal items*** --- towels, clothing, soap, deodorant, razors, etc.
- ✓ ***Keep cuts and abrasions clean and covered until well healed.*** This should be done immediately after a cut or abrasion occurs, using clean and sterile dressing to cover the wound. Always apply antiseptics to the dressing, not to the cut or abrasion, before covering the cut or abrasion.
- ✓ ***Clean your gear with a disinfectant cleaner after every use.*** This would include items such as wrestling headgear and shoes, football helmets and shoulder pads, etc.
- ✓ ***Shower immediately after every practice and game.*** Use a liquid antibacterial soap if possible. Do not share soap or towels with other athletes and be sure to use a clean towel after each shower.
- ✓ ***Check your skin frequently (everyday) for cuts, abrasions, and lesions.*** This includes areas that you cannot readily see, such as the back of the neck and the back of your upper body. Notify your parents, coach, and certified athletic trainer about any skin sores.

Millard Public Schools is committed to maintain a safe and healthy environment for your athletes. The training rooms, locker rooms, showers and wrestling rooms are cleaned and disinfected daily. During the wrestling season the mats are cleaned and disinfected before and after practices and matches. Showers are available for use by the athletes. Athletes have daily access to a certified athletic trainer. The well being of our athletes is our primary concern. Please know that we are taking all necessary precautions at our schools. If you have concerns about the cuts, abrasions or other breaks in the skin of your child, please consult the certified athletic trainer at your school and/or your physician.

Respectfully,

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