

Kentucky Wesleyan College

Policy & Procedure Manual

MRSA/Skin Infections Policy and Procedures

Approval: Vice President for Student Services & Dean of Students

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Responsible Office: Student Health Services

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1. Purpose

Kentucky Wesleyan College strives to prevent and protect all students, faculty, and staff from skin infections with special emphasis toward community-acquired Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Kentucky Wesleyan students, staff, and faculty.

3. Policy

All Kentucky Wesleyan staff, faculty, and student employees will adhere to the standards set forth in the following procedures.

4. Definitions

4.1. MRSA

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, a type of staph resistant to several antibiotics, is a kind of bacteria that can live harmlessly on the skin or in the nose of 25 to 35 percent of healthy people (this is often referred to as being “colonized” with the germ). Occasionally, staph can cause an infection. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States, but most of these infections are minor, such as pimples or boils. Most of these infections can be treated without antibiotics; however, some staph infections can cause serious infections, such as pneumonia, bloodstream, bone, and joint infections, and surgical wound infections. In the past, most serious staph bacterial infections were treated with a certain type of antibiotic related to penicillin. In recent years, treatment of these infections has become more difficult because staph bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics. These resistant bacteria are called Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). According to the

Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1% of the population is colonized with MRSA. MRSA is one type of skin infection among several that are of concern in competitive sports.

4.2. Who is at risk for skin infections such as Staph or MRSA?

Staph infections, including MRSA, have been traditionally associated with outbreaks in health-care facilities, but they are becoming increasingly common in students participating in close contact sports, although anyone, including coaches, staff, etc. who come into contact with colonized individuals, can contract the infection. Staph and MRSA are spread either by direct physical contact or indirect touching of contaminated objects. This includes touching, using, and/or sharing sheets, towels, razors, clothes, equipment, dressings, personal items, bar soap, etc. which have been used by someone who has staph and/or MRSA, along with poor hygiene habits (e.g. hand washing, showering, etc.).

4.3. What does Staph/MRSA look like?

Staph and/or MRSA usually first presents as some type of skin or soft tissue infection such as pimples, abscesses, pustules, and/or boils. Some can be red, swollen, painful, and/or have pus or other drainage. The pustules may be confused with insect or spider bites initially, and may also be associated with existing turf burns and/or abrasions.

4.4. Other possible skin infections

- Fungal Infections
 - Tinea capitis or Tinea corpus: Athletes foot
- Viral Infections
 - Herpes Simplex
 - Molluscum Contagiosum
- Bacterial Infections
 - Impetigo
 - Folliculitis/Furuncles/Carbuncles
 - MRSA

5. Procedures

5.1. Individual Response to Suspected Infection

Without proper referral and care, more serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream, bone, and/or joint infections, and/or surgical wound infections. **If you or anyone you know has what appears to look like staph and/or MRSA, it is mandatory that the Kentucky Wesleyan College School Nurse be contacted as soon as possible for evaluation. Athletes must also contact the OHRH Athletic Trainer, Owensboro Health Regional Hospital Team Physician.**

5.2. Nurse & Athletic Staff Responsibilities If An Outbreak Is Suspected

- 5.2.1. If a student presents with a suspicious skin infection, the nurse, trainer, or coach will refer the student to Convenient Care immediately. When a student informs the nurse, trainer, or coach of going to a medical facility for a skin infection, the nurse will contact GCA for appropriate protocol.
- 5.2.2. If the student comes back with a positive MRSA diagnosis, the Kentucky Wesleyan College School nurse will notify the athletic director and dean of students.

- 5.2.3. If the student is an athlete, coaching staff for the team will be notified to make sure the athlete's equipment is being washed by itself and not with the rest of the student-athletes'.
- 5.2.4. Head Athletic Trainer will also notify GCA to make sure the locker area/facility where the student-athlete practices/competes is cleaned. Custodial staff must be increased in order to prevent further outbreaks.
- 5.2.5. If a team has three (3) or more outbreaks of the same skin infection in a two week period the Nurse, Head Coach, Athletic Training staff, and athletic director will meet to discuss prevention strategies for that particular team to help control the spread of the skin infection.

5.3. Prevention

5.3.1. General Procedures

5.3.1.1. Measures to prevent the spread of organisms from one person to another are called isolation or infection controls. The specific type of infection control or isolation procedure required for a patient depends on the organism, where the organisms are found and its virulence. The most important type of isolation required for MRSA is called Contact Isolation. This type of isolation requires everyone in contact with the patient to observe proper hand washing protocols after touching either the patient or anything in contact with the patient. Because dust and surfaces can become contaminated with the organism, cleaning of surfaces are also important. Although treatable, complications can be associated with staph and/or MRSA infections, making prevention the best measure to combat these infections. The Centers for Disease Control suggest the following measures for preventing staphylococcal skin infections, including:

- Practice good hand hygiene by washing hands frequently and in a thorough fashion with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizers are placed throughout the Campus, including the Health and Recreation Center in the offices and Athletic Training room.
- Take a shower with hot water and wash with liquid antibacterial soap, not bar soap following all activities such as weight lifting, practices, and competitions.
- Avoid sharing towels, equipment, razors, soap etc.
- Use a barrier (e.g. clothing or a towel) between your skin and reusable equipment such as football shoulder pads and helmets.
- Wipe surfaces of equipment before and after use with an approved disinfectant.
- Clean and properly cover any open wounds such as turf burns, abrasions, lacerations, etc. with an appropriate bandage at all times. "Properly covered" means that the skin infection is covered by a securely attached bandage dressing that will contain all drainage and will remain intact throughout the sport activity. (NCAA 13-14)

- Avoid whirlpools, cold tubs, swimming pools, and other common if you have an open wound. If showering in a community bathroom please cover all wounds with appropriate bandaging.
- Maintain clean facilities and equipment.
- Do not ignore skin infections, pimples, pustules, abscesses, etc. Report these to an Athletic Trainer, school nurse or team physician immediately.
- Education of Student-Athletes, Students, and General Population – There will also be a colored informational poster with photos of MRSA displayed in the Athletic Training Room and weight room.

5.3.2. Prevention of Staff, MRSA, & Skin Infections

5.3.2.1. Cleaning Procedures

In order to maintain proper sanitary conditions with in Kentucky Wesleyan College facilities and to prevent the outbreak of Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and other harmful infections, the following procedures will be in place. The individual(s) responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the area will adhere to Universal Precautions at all times and wear PPE as needed.

5.3.2.1.1. Hard Surfaces

Treatment tables, taping tables, weight room / rehabilitation equipment, desks, keyboards, countertops, stools, etc. must be cleaned every day; and/or following a possible contamination using appropriate surface disinfectant/decontaminant cleaner. Kentucky Wesleyan College uses Clorox Bleach products, Mueller Whizzer, Cramer Isoquin and Lysol Cleaning products, METAQUAT, and Alert Services Cooler Cleaner.

5.3.2.1.2. Coolers

5.3.2.1.2.1. Coolers, ice chests, water bottles, water bottle tops must be cleaned and disinfected after every session using appropriate cleaner. At the end of the school year, all bottles and lids will be taken to a dish washer and cleaned for the summer.

5.3.2.1.2.2. Water bottles, and water bottle tops will be cleaned by washing them with liquid detergent then letting them soak for an hour. They will then be rinsed and allowed to air dry and then stored each night.

5.3.2.1.2.3. Coolers will be cleaned by using Alert Services Cooler cleaner and rinsed with warm water. They are stored upside down on racks above the whirlpools and allowed to air dry. The lids will be cleaned with the same cleaner. At no time will the lids be placed back on the coolers or ice chests.

5.3.2.1.2.4. Water buffaloes will be disinfected and rinsed out using both bleach and warm water or Steramine Tablets made for large containers of water. The straws will be cleaned in the same manner as the water bottle tops.

5.3.2.1.3. Towels

5.3.2.1.3.1. This is regarding the towels used in the athletic training room. Each team is responsible for providing towels for use in their practices and competitions. The coaches or managers are responsible for laundering their own towels and equipment.

5.3.2.1.3.1.1. Terry cloth towels are only to be used on an athlete once and will be placed in the laundry following every use. Laundry will be done at least twice a week.

5.3.2.1.3.1.2. Disposable towels should be used whenever feasible on the field / court and should be disposed of after a single use.

5.3.2.1.3.1.3. Any towel subjected to potentially contaminated bodily fluids should be handled according to OSHA guidelines.

5.3.2.1.4. Hydrocollator Packs / Covers

5.3.2.1.4.1. Hydrocollator covers should be laundered every day and/or following a possible contamination.

5.3.2.1.4.2. Clothing or disposable towel should be placed between the patient and the hydrocollator pack/cover if an open wound exists.

5.3.2.1.5. Returnable Medical Equipment

5.3.2.1.5.1. Soft durable medical equipment such as neoprene braces , sleeves, knee , elbow, forearm, shin pads, splints, lace-up ankle braces, shoulder braces, and walking boot liners should be laundered upon return to the athletic training facility BEFORE being returned to inventory and/or administered to another student-athlete.

5.3.2.1.5.2. Hard durable medical equipment that cannot be laundered should be disinfected using the aforementioned guidelines for treatment / taping tables, weight room / rehabilitation equipment, etc.

5.3.2.1.6. Whirlpools

5.3.2.1.6.1. Whirlpools shall be cleaned on a daily basis, or as needed following every possible contamination.

5.3.2.1.6.2. Once the whirlpool is filled, Betadine or Qzene Whirlpool disinfectant will be added as an extra disinfectant for the water.

5.3.2.1.6.3. Whirlpools are not to be used by student-athletes with open or draining wounds; whirlpools are to be cleaned using an appropriate Surface Disinfectant/Decontaminant Cleaner.

5.3.2.1.6.4. Whirlpools are to be cleaned in the following manner by spraying the whirlpool cleaner in and around the sides of the whirlpool. They will then be scrub on all surfaces of the whirlpool, including the bottom, sides and, turbine. The final step is rinsing the tank with hot water and allowing it to drain completely.

5.3.2.1.7. Facilities¹

5.3.2.1.7.1. Weight Rooms – GCA will clean the weight room thoroughly every Wednesday. Weight equipment will be cleaned by athletes after each use each day. Spray cleaner and towels are provided for this process. There also is Instant Hand Sanitizer available for athletes to use either before or after they use the weight room.

5.3.2.1.7.2. All other rooms are cleaned thoroughly by GCA, including all types of flooring and furniture on a daily basis.

5.3.2.1.8. Laundry

5.3.2.1.8.1. Each team's coaching personnel is responsible to make sure that practice, game uniforms, and towels are cleaned between uses.

5.3.2.1.8.2. It is not recommended to "overfill" the washing machines. This can result in the uniforms going through an inadequate washing cycle.

5.3.2.1.8.3. Rubber gloves can/will be provided for each team to use during washing.

5.3.2.1.8.4. Anyone performing the laundry should wash hands after each time touching soiled equipment.

5.3.2.1.8.5. It is recommended that the persons performing laundry do not place the clean clothes back into the same container that was used to transport the soiled clothes without first cleaning the inside of the container, or you can utilize a cloth laundry bag that can be washed with the soiled articles.

5.3.2.1.8.6. The laundry detergent is infused with bleach in every load.

5.3.2.2. Excluding Athletes with MRSA Infections from Participation

5.3.2.2.1. In general, athletes should be excluded if wounds cannot be properly covered during participation. This means that the skin infection is covered by a securely attached bandage or dressing that will contain all drainage and will remain intact throughout the activity. If wounds can be properly covered, good hygiene measures should be stressed to the athlete such as performing hand hygiene before and after changing bandages and throwing used bandages in the trash.

¹ Training room, Weight Rooms, Locker Rooms, Showers, Classrooms, Affected Dorm Rooms

5.3.2.2.2. A healthcare provider might exclude an athlete if the activity poses a risk to the health of the infected athlete (such as injury to the infected area), even though the infection can be properly covered.

5.3.2.2.3. Athletes with active infections or open wounds should not use whirlpools, therapy pools, or common use facilities like swimming pools not cleaned between each athlete until wounds are healed.

6. Resources

- *Journal of Athletic Training* 2010;45(4):411-428: National Athletic Trainers Association Position Statement: Skin Diseases
 - [NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook \(13-14\)](#) Guideline 2J Skin Infections p.67
 - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention – 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) update Sept. 10, 2013
 - [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. **Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* \(MRSA\) Infections** page.](#)
 - [Form ~ NCAA Skin Evaluation and Participation Status \(Physician Release for Student-Athlete to Participate with Skin Lesion\)](#)
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