

## What Can Athletes Do To Prevent A Skin Infection?

- Clean hands often with soap and water. Use alcohol hand rub if soap is not available and hands do not look dirty.
- Shower on site immediately after every practice and game. Use soap and warm water. Do not share towels.
- Cover all breaks in skin with a water proof bandage. Change the bandage if it gets wet.
- Wash clothes and towel, using detergent, after every practice and game. Dry all articles in a clothes dryer.
- Do not share ointments that are applied by placing your hands into an open container.
- Use a barrier like clothing or a towel between your skin and shared equipment.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, combs, razors
- Equipment and gear should be cleaned every day. Headgear and knee protection should be cleaned daily with a bleach wipe or other cleaning material. Clean towels should always be used.
- Never put your dirty clothes in the same bag you use to carry clean clothes.
- Wear sandals or shoes at gyms, locker rooms and pools.
- Report any skin problems to your athletic trainer, school nurse, coach, or health care provider
- Tell your health care provider you participate in competitive sports

Additionally, regular sleep, stress reduction, and maintaining good skin hydration can all be helpful in boosting immunity and preventing the spread of other opportunistic skin infections.

This pamphlet includes information about four skin infections. This information incorporates current CDC guidelines.

### STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS “STAPH”

- Caused by bacteria
- Typically one or more painful sores, with pus surrounded by redness, sometimes associated with fever

(MRSA is a staph infection that is resistant to commonly-used antibiotics.)

### HERPES

- Caused by virus (the same virus that causes cold sores in the mouth)
- Typically one or more painful blisters with clear fluid surrounded by redness

### TINEA “RINGWORM”

- Caused by fungus
- Typically itchy, dry, red, circular patches

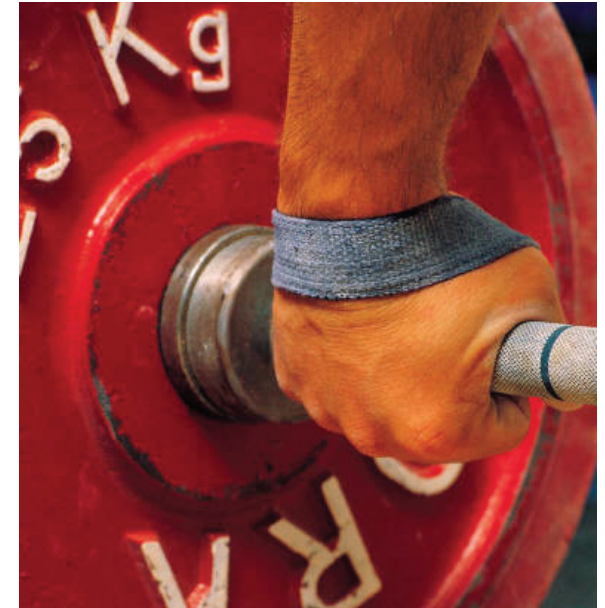
### IMPETIGO

- Caused by bacteria
- Typically a contagious skin infection that usually produces blisters or sores on the face and hands, is one of the most common skin infections among kids.

**Get medical care for your infection.  
Do not try to treat it yourself.**

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## Preventing Skin Infection In Athletes



**CHARLES  
COLE** MEMORIAL  
HOSPITAL  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CARE

1001 EAST SECOND STREET  
U.S. ROUTE 6 EAST  
COUDERSPORT, PA 16915  
TELEPHONE 814-274-9300

[WWW.CHARLESCOLEHOSPITAL.COM](http://WWW.CHARLESCOLEHOSPITAL.COM)

## STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS & MRSA

### What is MRSA?

Staphylococcus aureus, often called “staph”, is a type of bacteria commonly found on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. MRSA stands for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus and is a staph that is resistant to commonly used antibiotics. In the community, most MRSA infections may appear as sores or boils that are often red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur either at sites of breaks in the skin and areas of the body covered by hair (for example the back of the neck, groin, buttock, armpit or the beard area of men).

### How do you get MRSA?

MRSA is usually spread from person to person through direct skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces. MRSA might spread more easily among athletes because, during participation, athletes have repeated skin to skin contact.

### What does MRSA look like?

Pay attention for signs of infection such as redness, warmth, swelling, pus and pain at sites where your skin has sores, abrasions or cuts. Sometimes these infections can be confused as spider bites.

## HERPES GLADIATORUM

### What is herpes gladiatorum?

Herpes gladiatorum is a skin infection caused by the herpes simplex virus. Sports that involve close physical contact with herpes gladiatorum lesions may spread this infection to other athletes.

### What is herpes gladiatorum illness like?

Generally the lesions (or sores) appear within eight days after exposure to an infected person. The lesions may appear as a cluster of blisters and may be on the face, arm, legs or trunk. In some cases, swollen lymph nodes, fever or tingling on the skin may be associated with herpes gladiatorum.

All athletes with skin sores or lesions should be referred to their primary care provider for evaluation and possible treatment. These individuals should not participate in practice or competition until their lesions have healed.

### How can herpes gladiatorum infection be prevented?

Personal hygiene is essential. Athletes should shower immediately after practice, using soap and water. Hands should be cleaned often - at minimum before and after practice and competitions. Clean all equipment and mats with a disinfectant spray after each practice and competition.

## IMPETIGO

### What is impetigo?

Impetigo usually starts as a red sore. The sore ruptures quickly, oozing either fluid or pus that forms a honey-colored crust. The sores may be itchy, but they aren't painful.

Two types of bacteria cause impetigo—Staphylococcus aureus (staph) and Streptococcus pyogenes (strep).

### How do you get impetigo?

Impetigo is common in sports because of the increased perspiration, body heat, and friction caused by sports equipment. The extra moisture and warmth create an environment that encourages growth of the bacteria and the friction provides breaks in the skin to allow the bacteria to enter. This infected skin rash occurs after a person has contact with this bacteria, usually over an area of broken skin. The bacteria may be on another person's skin or on equipment.

### How can impetigo be prevented?

The spread of impetigo can be reduced by good hand washing. All wounds should be kept clean and watched for possible signs of infection such as redness, swelling, drainage and pain at the wound site.

## RINGWORM

### What is ringworm?

Ringworm is a common skin disorder, caused by a fungus – not a worm. Ringworm occurs when a particular type of fungus grows and multiplies anywhere on your skin, scalp or nails. Ringworm symptoms include itchy, red, raised scaly patches with sharply-defined edges. They are often redder around the outside with normal skin tone in the center. The rash can be dry and scaly or wet and crusty. When the scalp or beard is infected, you will have bald patches. If nails are infected, they become discolored, thick and even crumble.

### How do you get ringworm?

Ringworm is contagious and is passed from one person to the next by direct skin-to-skin contact or by contact with contaminated items or surfaces. The fungi that cause ringworm thrive in warm moist areas. Ringworm is more likely when you have frequent wetness (as from sweating) and minor injuries to your skin, scalp or nails.

### How can ringworm be prevented?

- Keep your skin and feet clean and dry. Shampoo regularly, especially after haircuts.
- Do not share headgear, clothing, towels or personal care items.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: [WWW.HEALTH.STATE.PA.US/SPORTSHEALTH](http://WWW.HEALTH.STATE.PA.US/SPORTSHEALTH)**