

Stay in the Game

As an athlete, you may be at risk for serious skin infections. Know how to protect yourself.

How can I keep from getting skin infections?

Protect your skin

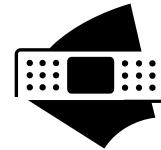
- ✓ Keep scrapes, burns and wounds covered with waterproof bandages until completely healed.
- ✓ Don't use loofahs, netted sponges or other scrubbing items.
- ✓ Don't get any tattoos or piercings.

Keep yourself clean

- ✓ Wash your hands often, including:
 - before and after practice
 - after using the restroom
 - after changing wound dressings
- ✓ When showering, wash sores last.
- ✓ Use towels, washcloths and clothing once and wash in warm or hot water.
- ✓ Shower immediately after training, practice sessions or a game.

Avoid catching something

- ✓ Don't share:
 - razors
 - towels and washcloths
 - deodorant
 - bars of soap
 - towels during games or practice
- ✓ Don't use someone else's clothing, towels or equipment
- ✓ Wash your hands often and use hand sanitizers to kill germs.



How do I know if I have a skin infection?

Some sores may get minor infections that will heal quickly. Common signs of skin infections include fever, pus, swelling, tenderness, or pain. Serious infections can also look like a pimple, blister or seeping sore and can occur anywhere on the body.

What do I do if I think I have a skin infection?

If you have any questions about any sore or injury, ask your trainer and call your physician.

SCIENCE NOTES

Staph (Official name: *Staphylococcus aureus*)

- The most common cause of skin infections.
- Can be found on healthy skin.
- Most infections are minor (such as pimples and boils).
- Can also cause serious infections, like surgical wound infections and pneumonia.
- Some staph has become resistant to various antibiotics.
- One type of these bacteria are called methicillin-resistant *Staph. aureus*, or MRSA.
- Most staph bacteria and MRSA are susceptible to several antibiotics.
- Staph and MRSA can spread through close contact with infected people.
- MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact, and not through the air.
- Spread may also occur by touching objects (i.e., towels, sports equipment).

