



MARKKULA CENTER FOR APPLIED ETHICS

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Thinking Ethically About MRSA: Best Practices in College and High School Athletics

By Margaret R. McLean

The prime directive in managing MRSA is prevention

Core Ethical Concerns

Honesty

- Creating an environment in which honesty is expected and supported
- Appropriate reporting of suspected skin infections
- Athletes, trainers, coaches, team physicians, (parents/guardians)

Responsibility

- Athletes have the responsibility to themselves and to their team to report any suspected skin infection
- Athletes should be encouraged to complete daily skin surveillance and report suspicious lesions
- Colleges and high schools should provide education on MRSA prevention, symptoms, and treatment
- Athletic department, athletes, parents/guardians
- When appropriate, parents/guardians have a responsibility to act as “check-points” between the athlete and the team

Minimizing Risk to Self and Others

- Adequate team (parent/guardian) education
- Implementation of appropriate hygiene and prevention practices, including:
 - clean towels, uniforms, equipment
 - use of disinfectant
 - adequate hand washing and showering
- Encouraging disclosure
- When necessary, restricting an athlete from playing in a game or participating in practice (includes self-restriction)
- Particular concern for athletes (and others) with G6PD Deficiency who cannot take many of the antibiotics used to treat MRSA

Margaret R. McLean is the bioethics director and associate director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics.

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