



FURY FASTPITCH

Attack of the Coccus Bacteria

Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and Group A streptococcus are the two most common bacteria that cause skin infections. Infections of these types have skyrocketed among athletes in recent years. These bacterial infections break down the immune system and weaken the body's ability to fight the infection.

The Warning Signs of a Bacterial Infection

- Redness, swelling, warmth, and tenderness at the site of what may look like a pimple, skin lesion, blister, boil or a spider bite
- A painful, pus-filled rash

Bacterial infection may lead to blood stream infections, pneumonia, toxic shock syndrome, and death. Symptoms may include pain, fever, and chills. MRSA is most commonly misdiagnosed as a spider bite, impetigo, or a harmless pimple.

Injuries often occur as a result of sliding, getting struck with a batted ball, falling down on the base paths and getting minor skin breaks with small gravel in the skin, etc. Typically the injury takes some time to manifest itself. Often the athlete continues to play and does not clean the area immediately. There may not be blood, just a skin break or abrasion. Even minor skin abrasions can have serious consequences. At a minimum, players should get immediate care and cleaning of the wound.

Also, staph is quite common on ball fields that use reclaimed water to irrigate. And astroturf fields may add to the danger because of the accumulation of spit/skin/sweat/blood and germs combined with the turf burns players can get playing on them. Bacteria can also accumulate under sweaty sliding or knee pads so they should be washed or replaced regularly, especially if you notice a foul odor.

To help prevent bacterial infection:

- *Increase hand hygiene and showering with soap after activities.*
- *Cover wounds (e.g. cuts, abrasions).*
- *Avoid sharing gear with others*
- *Laundering of personal items after each use (e.g. towels).*
- *Disinfection of shared athletic equipment regularly (e.g. pads, helmets).*
- *Consult with physician for wounds that do not heal.*