



The Mission of the Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association is to advance and strengthen the profession of Athletic Training while delivering and advocating for high quality healthcare.

www.OATA.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Skin Infections can be very simple or complex, so how do you know the difference? It is important that parents, athletes and coaches seek out medical care from physicians and athletic trainers related to any skin lesions. Early detection and treatment is the key to preventing the spread of infection.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) also has specific requirements related to return to play following a skin lesion. The requirements include how long the athlete needs to be on medication prior to participation, as well as requiring a specific form to be filled out by the treating physician.

Two common skin infections in sports, specifically wrestling are ringworm and MRSA.

Ringworm (also known as *tinea capitis* when it affects the head or *tinea corporis* when it affects the body) is a fungal condition found in the top layer of skin. This infection is very common in areas of the body exposed to friction by folds of skin. The underarms and groin are two areas where moisture collects and friction occurs due to the frequent rubbing of skin and thereby provide optimal environments for ringworm to manifest itself. This is a highly contagious condition that may be spread from sharing towels and clothing items, as well as through person-to-person contact. One factor that contributes to outbreaks is moisture accumulating on wrestling mats, swimming pool decks, locker rooms, weight rooms, and showers. The best treatment is prevention through good hygiene, which involves periodic wiping down of mats and use of flip flop-type shoes when walking through wet areas of locker rooms and pool decks. Athletes should avoid participation in athletic activity until lesions are no longer present.

MRSA (*Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus*) has been given much more media attention lately, due to potentially serious implications of these skin infections. MRSA is a bacterial infection that is resistant to many standard antibiotics. One can contract MRSA through direct contact with someone who has the bacteria or through use of shared items such as razors or towels. MRSA lesions usually begin as pimples (pustules) with an elevated, reddened ring around it. These skin lesions may drain pus and are often painful to the touch. MRSA infections are more common in areas where there has been a break in the skin, such as a surgical incision, a cut, a bite, or abrasion, which provides an entry point for the bacteria. MRSA is best treated by a physician and should be immediately referred for appropriate diagnosis and plan of care. All lesions that look suspicious should be treated as an active infection and covered. The physician will often culture the lesion and place the patient on an appropriate course of antibiotics. Athletes with MRSA should not participate in any activity until they are cleared by a physician. The best treatment is active prevention through good personal hygiene, as well as maintaining a clean athletic environment. Ensuring a thorough daily disinfection will reduce the likelihood of an outbreak.

Athletic Trainers can help to prevent, recognize, and treat skin infections. Prevention is the key to optimum management of this condition. For more information and Ohio High School Athletic Association guidelines regarding their standards for return to play, please visit www.ohsaa.org under wrestling.

The American Medical Association recognizes Athletic Trainers as Allied Healthcare Professional. Athletic trainers in Ohio are licensed by The Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers' Board. Athletic Trainers specialize in assessment, evaluation and acute care of injuries. They are trained in therapeutic exercise and rehabilitation. Also, they are trained in risk management and injury prevention. Athletic Trainers are involved in Health Care Administration and Professional Development. Please visit www.oata.org to learn more.