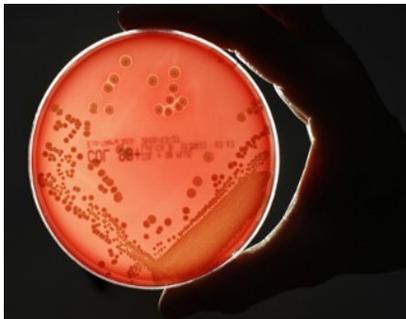




Is Your Turf Field a Breeding Ground for MRSA?

By Sports-O-Zone USA, LLC
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With nearly 800 new synthetic turf fields being installed annually¹ and the increasing spread of MRSA bacteria among athletes, one has to consider a potential correlation between the two. Many researchers blame turf burns or areas of the skin that have been abraded as being the



MRSA MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)

source and the means of spreading the bacteria. So is your turf field infecting your athlete?

For the Staphylococcus Aureus, "Staph", to invade your athlete, the bacteria must have a point of entry which can be as simple as a hair follicle or a cut or abrasion to the skin. Most abrasions to the skin come from the field. Just because the field is the source of

the abrasion may not mean the turf is the source of the infection. According to the observations of researcher Sophia Kazakova, MD, MPH, PhD of the CDC, "These abrasions were usually left uncovered, and when combined with frequent skin-to-skin contact throughout the football season, probably constituted both the source and the vehicle for transmission."¹

So even though skin-to-skin contact can be the vehicle of transmission, could your turf field also be a vehicle of transmission? According to NCAA's David Klossner, "We have an injury reporting tracking system and its limited by sample size, but we haven't had any linkage to turf."

The CDC was invited into the St. Louis Ram's locker room and home field in 2003. They actually observed the game, mapped where the contact on the turf occurred, and areas where there wasn't any direct contact, and didn't find any MRSA. In a 2005 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, this new research concluded that the MRSA infections among the 2003



Turf Field

St. Louis Rams were likely spread among players on as well as off the field through rough play, shared towels, whirlpools, and weights.



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Penn State University sampled 20 synthetic turf fields in Pennsylvania in June of 2006. The samples came from indoor as well as outdoor fields. They concluded that there were less total microbes present in the infill or fibers of the synthetic turf systems tested as compared to natural turf grass root zones and that the Staph bacteria were not found on any of the playing surfaces,

but were found on towels and other devices used by the athletes.² They also found that surface temperatures of outdoor infill synthetic turf systems often exceeded the temperature range of the Staph bacteria (between 45oF and 118oF) and have been reported to be as high as 199oF.^{2,3} However, high surface temperatures do not explain the relatively low numbers of total

microbes on indoor playing surfaces. These low numbers may, in part, be explained by the permanently very low moisture content of indoor infilled surfaces.³



to your athletes. Skin-to-skin contact and shared athletic equipment are much more effective vehicles to transmit MRSA. When disinfecting your athletic equipment, we hope you consider the Sports-O-Zone system.

Based on the evidence of the CDC's study of the St. Louis Ram's facility in 2003, the Penn State University study of turf fields, as well as temperature constraints to grow the staph bacteria and/or lack of moisture, one would have to conclude that synthetic turfs are not a good environments for the staph bacteria to grow or to be a vehicle to transmit bacteria

1 Coach and Athletic Director, The invisible enemy, Nov. 2006

2 Andrew McNitt, Penn State U, A survey of microbial population in infill synthetic turf fields 2006

3 Andrew McNitt, Penn State U, Evaluation of Playing Surface Characteristics of Various In-Filled Systems 2003