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## FEATURED ARTICLE

# MRSA Superbug in Gym Clubs: 7 Ways to Stay Safe



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## High Incidence Among School Athletes Puts Spotlight On Health Clubs

With the number of MRSA Superbug cases rising among high school and college athletes, could the same risk factors put members of commercial gyms and health clubs at risk? Common sense says yes.

An inventory of the leading medical establishments' MRSA-related websites shows that there is cause for extra caution these days while working on your abs and taking yoga class at your local health club.

The [Mayo Clinic](#) reports the following risk factors:

-Participating in contact sports. CA-MRSA has crept into both amateur and professional sports teams. The bacteria is spread easily through cuts and abrasions and skin-to-skin contact.

-Sharing towels or athletic equipment. Although few outbreaks have been reported in public gyms, CA-MRSA has spread among athletes sharing razors, towels, uniforms or equipment.

From the [Centers For Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) on preventing MRSA:

-practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after participating in exercise);

-avoiding sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin; and using a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches.

While the CDC advice was directed more to the school setting, the same opportunities for the spread of MSRA exist in membership gyms and health clubs as well.

Some easy precautions for avoiding MRSA while working on your abs at the local health club:

1. Many gyms provide cleaning sprays and paper towels for use by patrons. Spray the handles of cardio equipment both before and after use. If your health club does not provide cleaning products, tell them they should.
2. Use a towel between you and the bench when lifting weights.
3. Use a towel between you and hand weights when weight training.
4. Carry an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and use it between machines when circuit training.
5. Bring your own yoga mat.
6. Ask if your gym washes and dries towels in hot water and hot dryers. If you suspect it doesn't, or they don't know, bring your own towels from home.



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7. Wash your own gym clothes at home in hot water and a hot dryer after every work-out.

Medical experts believe that the MRSA Superbug evolved from a common Staph bacterium because of both the over prescribing of prescription antibiotics and the increased use by consumers of antibiotic cleaning sprays formulated for use in kitchens and baths.

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