

Proper Hygienic Practices

The sport of wrestling is very tactile. One of the most important things to remember is proper hygiene. Athletes are asked to shower immediately after wrestling practice or competition. When showering, it is important to use a mesh scrub with antibacterial soap. This aids in removing any unwanted bacteria and infections the athlete might have picked up during skin to skin contact. Another important prevention technique is to thoroughly clean and disinfect all wrestling mats as well as equipment, including all uniforms and towels, after every use. Athletes should also be discouraged from sharing such items as unwashed towels and uniforms even shoes and headgear. Following proper hygiene practices and thorough disinfection techniques can greatly decrease the risk of obtaining skin infections among wrestlers.

Points to Remember

~ Shower immediately after each practice or competition. Use your own bottled soap and towel and don't share them with others, let alone other toiletries. Studies have shown that transmission of infectious diseases can occur when these items are shared with other athletes.

~ Use an anti-bacterial wipe to clean your skin immediately after each match during a competition. This will help remove bacteria before you have the opportunity to shower.

~ Never wear your wrestling shoes outside of the wrestling room, if you have to, clean them with bleach before you enter the room. Never wear recreational shoes inside the wrestling room.

~ Don't share water bottles. Viruses and bacterial infections can be easily transmitted via a shared bottle.

~ Don't perform cosmetic shaving. Needless shaving of the chest or legs has been associated with increased outbreaks of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcal Aureus (MRSA). Consider cropping or closely trimming the areas if necessary.

~ Wash equipment on a routine basis. Work-out clothing after each practice. Consider washing smaller pads (for knees) on a weekly basis or even each day (1:100 solution of household bleach and water).

~ Don't let abrasions or open sores go without evaluation by your coach or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC). Be sure to keep them clean and covered with proper dressings. This even includes mat burn or scratches.

~ Inform your coach or ATC about any suspicious lesion at the beginning of practice. Consider withdrawal from practice or competition until the lesion is evaluated by your ATC. If it is considered infectious, wait to return to competition until it has cleared by your ATC. Also have other team mates evaluated for such lesions and cared for in the same manner.