

- This brochure is provided to the parents and athletes involved with wrestling and other contact sports at Snider High School to promote the health and well-being of all involved
- Understanding disease transmission helps cooperation with prevention guidelines.
- Guidelines for the individual's health and well-being are provided.

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Editor

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Infectious Disease Prevention in Wrestling and Other Contact Sports



“Wrestling prepares a boy to fight the game of life. The wrestler is the one athlete that must meet his opponent and do battle completely on his own; no one can substitute; no time outs are possible. He has no one to check, screen, block or assist him in anyway. There is no one to blame for his mistakes. When he wins, he must show quiet pride and modesty; when he loses the responsibility is his. Wrestling is a man’s sport. In other sports, when contact is made, the whistle is

blown to stop the action; in wrestling when contact is made, the action is just beginning. No sport requires more sacrifice than wrestling. Through self-denial and effort, the individual adds more to his character than can ever be explained. This experience is something he carries with him throughout life, and through every trial, test, and tribulation.”

Author unknown

Physical fitness for any contact sport is essential. Wrestling requires exceptional attention to the details which keep the wrestler and the team in the peak of health. There are a variety of infectious diseases which can be transmitted among athletes. This pamphlet is provided to parents and ath-

letes to increase awareness and understanding of these diseases and the precautions taken to limit their transmission.

While these diseases can be self-limiting or easily treated, an outbreak of any of them can severely impact the team as a whole and its scheduled events. Athletes, trainers and coaches all play a role in team fitness and disease prevention and a successful season.

It is crucial that the athlete take personal responsibility for his own health to avoid infection for himself as well as all the others in the wrestling community. Practice of infection control measures also has life-long benefits.

Disease Transmission Occurs in Several Ways

Person-to-person transmission occurs primarily with extensive skin-to-skin contact. The presence of skin injuries such as burns, abrasions, and bruises aid disease transmission. When bleeding is involved the potential also exists for transmission of blood-borne pathogens including HIV and Hepatitis B.

Common Source transmissions occur when there is sharing of food, beverages

or drinking containers. Drinking from a common source of contaminated water such as the team’s ice chest has been reported as the culprit outbreaks of viral illnesses.

Airborne/droplet transmission occurs in settings that confine large groups of people to an indoor settings. Measles, Chickenpox and influenza are transmitted this way.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Common Skin Infections | 2 |
| Other Contagious Conditions | 3 |
| Prevention Measures | 3 |
| Sources & Acknowledge- | 3 |
| Why Wrestling? | 4 |
| Guidelines for the Athlete | 4 |

Bacterial Skin Infections

Streptococcal and staphylococcal infections cause such conditions as folliculitis and impetigo.

Impetigo most often occurs in exposed areas such as the hands and face. It causes pustules and round, crusted oozing patches which grow larger daily. It often starts at the site of a minor skin injury.

Treatment depends on the severity of the problem

- √ Use 1/2 c. white vinegar to a litre of tepid water several times a day to soak and clean moist or crusted areas

- √ Antibiotic ointment applied three times a day or as the doctor prescribes.

- √ Oral antibiotics are used at times to hasten resolution.

Most conditions are usually self-limiting or respond quickly to treatment.

Fungal Skin Infections

The most talked about fungal infection is “ringworm” or tinea corporis. This condition is not

caused by worms, but by dermatophyte or other fungus.

The hallmark sign of “ringworm” is a round or oval red scaly patches with a pale center. These round areas can grow in size and sometimes multiple rings occur. These areas may itch.

Transmission is generally by direct contact with a human or animal source such as family pets.

Treatment requires the use of antifungal agent such as Lamisil, Lotrimin, or Micatin ointment available over the counter. Application of the ointment should include a margin around the lesion and should continue to be applied about a week after the skin seems clear.

Usually the patch fades steadily over the course of a few days. Fungal infections on the face also respond to this treatment, but sometimes require an oral agent prescribed by the doctor.

A prescription is required and must be taken as directed for the duration prescribed.

Folliculitis or boils are commonly caused by staph. bacteria. Recommended treatment includes soap and water, antiseptics, antibiotic ointments.

MRSA is a different strain of staph. bacteria. It requires the same treatment and usually an oral antibiotic. This requires a doctor’s care.



Protect Yourself

Wash your hands frequently through out each day.

Wash uniforms and towels after each use .

During sports season shower thoroughly after each practice and competition.

Viral Skin Infections

Herpes simplex type 1 outbreaks have been reported among wrestlers. Commonly known as cold sores these typically appear as clusters of blisters on a pink base which usually crust and heal within a few days. Spread is by direct contact with the infected secretions.

Molluscum Contagiosum can resemble pimples at first. Enlarged, they often have a waxy pinkish look with a small central pit. There is no single treatment although the doctor may use a minor surgical technique to combat this virus.

Tinea capitis involves the scalp. These show up as an inflamed area with a purulent boggy mass. Small nicks in the scalp from hair care instruments can leave the scalp vulnerable to this infection.

Treatment requires a doctor’s care. These infections can require up to six months of oral antifungal therapy. Exclusion from school is required for scalp infections until treatment is well underway.

Tinea pedis is the familiar “athlete’s foot”. Proper foot care is important to prevent this problem. Feet should be dried thoroughly and cotton socks are recommended. Treatment: over-the-counter antifungal ointments or powders.

Other Contagious Conditions

Contagious conditions that occur in sports range from the common to the rare, from the trivial to the serious. Medical literature reports the following conditions which have impacted contact support:

- Upper respiratory infections
- Infectious mononucleosis.
- Vaccine-preventable conditions such as Hepatitis A & B, Influenza A & B, Measles, mumps, rubella and Chickenpox.
- Parasitic conditions such as head and body lice and



Wrestling Requires Optimum Health

- Others include acute gastroenteritis, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat and STD's.

Problems that do not improve quickly should be seen by a physician.

Prevention - The First Choice!

Prevention of disease occurs at several levels.:

The sports program must validate the immunization record for each athlete. A 2nd Measles shot is required in Indiana along with the DPT and Polio vaccines.

The program must provide education to the coaching staff and trainers so that first aid using universal precautions is the standard.

Additionally, great care must be taken to insure infection control measures are carried out regarding

mats and equipment.

Coaches must exclude those with signs of illness such as fever, vomiting or diarrhea.

Wounds and lesions must be securely bandaged during practice and competition.

Public health officials should be informed promptly of the first notifiable illness (such as measles) to enable prompt investigation and decision making regarding control measures.

Non-Contagious Conditions

Not all skin conditions are contagious. They require a different kind of treatment. They include:

- Contact dermatitis causes an allergic skin response to such things as poison ivy, fabric softener, & jewelry
- Psoriasis appears as red, scaly areas usually on both elbows, hands or knees
- Eczema appears as yellowish, oily, scaly patches on the scalp, face or chest.

The doctor will need to inspect the condition and know when and where the problem started. Some of these conditions require simple changes in skin care and others need prescription remedies.

The individual athlete must adhere to the measures outlined on page 4.

Parents may consult their physician regarding a Tetanus booster or additional vaccines for Hepatitis B and Chickenpox.

The school nurse can supply shot histories and update them as new ones are acquired.



References:

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- www.dermnet.org.nz/index.html
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- *Mast & Goodman: Prevention of Infectious Disease Transmission in Sports*, SPORTS MEDICINE 24 (1):1-7,1997
- Communicable Disease Flip-chart for School Personnel ISDM
- www.drkoop.com
- www-medlib.med.utah.edu

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Why Wrestling?

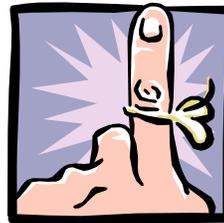
"This is a question which many parents ask their sons when they announce they are going out for wrestling partly because of the spectacles seen on television. Wrestling is one of man's most beautiful and honored ancient sports. Ever since man began living in groups he has at one time or other felt the urge to compete with others. Thus wrestling was born. Important skills which are drawn upon in wrestling include development of neuromuscular control, and cardiovascular development. Strength, agility, stamina, self-discipline, and self-reliance are all factors which are encouraged and developed. A successful wrestler is a total athlete. He must be skilled in all aspects of the sport, he must always be a tactician and evaluator. Down through the centuries man has generally sought to place limiting rules upon his forms of competition and true wrestling is no exception. There are various forms of wrestling. Each has rules which are designed ultimately to protect the lives, limbs (and health) of the competitors."

Author unknown



Guidelines for Athletes – Promote Health &

- Practice good daily hygiene
- Plan to shower with soap and water after every practice and competition.
- Do not share towels, equipment.
- Do not drink from common sources including water bottles or ice chests
- Make sure skin injuries are treated promptly.
- Make sure wounds or lesions are securely covered with bandages during sports activities.
- Avoid using ointments and powders distributed from common containers.
- Report any skin changes or problems.
- Comply with routine skin examination.
- Laundry athletic clothing and towels after each use. (This is no longer your parent's responsibility although they may chose to help.)
- Properly and frequently clean pads and head gear
- Comply with all immunization requirements.
- Report any signs of illness such as fever, rash, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
- If a doctor's care is required, follow through with treatment exactly as prescribed for the designated length of time.
- Plan on getting 7-8 hours sleep most of the time.
- Use good nutrition for growth, development and wt. control.
- Avoid smoking. It limits the uptake of oxygen needed for endurance.
- Continue to abstain from any form of sexual activity to avoid STD's
- Continue to avoid the use of illicit drugs including steroids.
- For clear reasoning and sound judgment, continue to avoid the use of any alcoholic beverages.
- Practice good sportsmanship. Avoid fist-fights.



Things to Remember!