

GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF SKIN CONDITIONS IN WRESTLING

The following guidelines are not meant to be all inclusive of what may need to be done to prevent skin conditions from occurring in wrestling. They provide practical suggestions that, when implemented, should help reduce the incidence of skin conditions occurring among high school wrestlers. Some of the guidelines go above and beyond what would normally need to be done to prevent skin infections from occurring. However, in instances where some wrestlers, or entire teams, seem to be extremely susceptible to skin conditions the more extreme guidelines may prove to be very worthwhile. Some coaches are currently implementing most of the guidelines. Others may be utilizing only selected ones. Whatever the case, restricting wrestlers with skin lesions from participation and keeping a clean wrestling environment are the keys to reducing the incidence of skin infections.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- 1) Clean wrestling mats at least once a day with a disinfectant cleaner*, preferably within one hour of practice or competition. Allow mats to air dry before using. **There is great benefit from cleaning mats before and after practice.** *(Disinfectant cleaners used should state they are effective against viruses, fungi, and bacteria. Typically the label will state the cleaner is bactericidal, fungicidal, & virucidal. Follow the label directions closely for the best effectiveness. A 1:100 solution of household bleach and water (1/4 cup bleach per gallon of water) is an excellent disinfectant cleaner, however, it may cause skin rashes. It should be mixed fresh daily and stored in a dark colored container. 70% Isopropyl alcohol is also an excellent disinfectant cleaner.
- 2) Wash wall mats with a disinfectant cleaner on a regular basis (1-2 times weekly).
- 3) Wipe weight room benches with a disinfectant cleaner after use and/or prior to the next day's use.
- 4) Don't allow any wrestler into the practice room without clean practice gear! Launder towels (including wash cloths), practice gear, and uniforms after each use. Use detergent containing bleach or dry all articles in a dryer.
- 5) Wipe head gear and shoes with a disinfectant cleaner after each practice.
- 6) Do not allow wrestlers to share any item of practice gear or towels!
- 7) Require each wrestler to shower after each practice and contest, scrubbing vigorously with an antibacterial or deodorant soap. Consider providing liquid soap. If this is not possible, do not allow wrestlers to share bars of soap.
- 8) Have each wrestler supply their own soap and shampoo, or have dispensers containing liquid soap available.
- 9) Athletes with acne problems may wish to use astringent pads (ie. Stridex) to clean their face and neck, or other affected areas, after showering.

10) Open the doors to the wrestling room each night and use fans to lower the heat and humidity. Proper ventilation is very important to destroy disease causing organisms, especially those causing fungal conditions, such as ringworm.

11) Do not allow athletes to use common towels for any reason, including at mat side!

12) Wrestlers should not put dirty practice clothes in the same gym bag in which they carry clean practice clothes to school. This may contaminate the bag and, therefore, the clean clothes.

13) Neoprene sleeves and supports should be wiped with a disinfectant cleaner after every use and be allowed to air dry.

14) Wrestlers should keep their finger nails trimmed short to avoid scratching themselves or someone else, as any opening in the skin increases the risk of infection.

15) Wrestlers should boost their natural immunity to all diseases by eating healthy foods and getting adequate rest. They may also wish to take a one-a-day, multivitamin.

16) Coaches should visit with wrestlers, and their parents, about how to recognize and prevent the most common skin diseases.

17) Wrestlers who have been susceptible to skin conditions in the past may want to visit with their family physician regarding preventive oral medication.

GUIDELINES FOR WRESTLERS WHO HAVE A CURRENT SKIN CONDITION:

1) Wrestlers with any signs of a communicable skin condition MUST be withheld from practice until a medical diagnosis and clearance is obtained.

2) Wrestlers having any signs or symptoms of a communicable skin condition should be sent to a doctor IMMEDIATELY!

3) Wrestlers with a skin condition, who have current written permission from a physician to participate, should cover affected area with an occlusive (water resistant) dressing or a gauze pad with water resistant covering on at least one side until the lesion(s) is completely gone!

4) Wrestlers having lesions from a communicable skin condition on their face or neck should launder their pillow case on a daily basis.

5) Wrestlers with any signs of a communicable skin condition should wash their hands frequently to avoid contaminating themselves, or others.

6) Wrestlers with communicable skin conditions should be made aware that contact they have with others during the school day, outside the wrestling room, may spread the disease to others.