

INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND HYGIENE

Last updated: June 2020

TRANSMISSION:

People can be exposed to infection through participation in sport in a variety of ways:

- Through blood to blood contact via broken skin and open wounds. (HIV and Hepatitis C)
- Through contact between a person's broken skin, mouth, eyes and another person's infected body fluid. (Hepatitis B and Meningococcal disease)
- Through exposure of the skin to another person's infected skin or body fluids. This may be via direct body contact or indirectly through the use of shared equipment, clothing and other surfaces that remain moist for a period of time. (Fungal skin infections, viral infections, parasites)
- Through ingestion of contaminated food and drink. (Hepatitis A and Gastroenteritis)
- By breathing in airborne droplets of saliva when an infectious person coughs, sneezes or spits. (Common cold and flu)

REDUCING THE RISK OF INFECTION:

The risk of being infected with a blood-borne virus or other serious infection through participation in sport is very low, however infection is possible. The following guidelines will further reduce the risk of infection.

BEFORE THE GAME:

- It is important that all playing surfaces should be as well maintained as possible. (Free of dirt, dust, and other obstructions)
- All pre-existing wounds must be covered.
- First-aid equipment required.

DURING THE GAME:

- A player who is bleeding or has blood on their clothing must leave the court and seek medical attention.
- The bleeding must be completely stopped, the wound dressed and any blood on the player's body cleaned off before returning to the game.
- Play must stop until any blood on the court or equipment is cleaned. Any clothing affected must be removed.
- Use gloves when handling blood or anything with blood on it.
- Don't share clothing, towels, nail clippers, drink bottles, medication inhalers or any other personal equipment which may have blood, saliva or other body fluids present.

AFTER THE GAME:

- Blood soaked clothes and bibs should be washed in cold water first then followed by hot water and detergent.
- Contaminated dressings, tissues etc. should be placed in a plastic bag and disposed of in the normal rubbish bin.
- Players should observe good personal hygiene in the changing rooms.
- Changing rooms should be cleaned properly.
- Seek immediate medical advice, with your own doctor, local community health service or hospital if you are concerned that you may have become infected.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Whilst disclosing health status is not required under law, there may be circumstances when a player might consider telling a coach or other team/club official about a medical condition. Players are legally entitled to have this information remain confidential and it is not appropriate to disclose the health status of any player without their consent.

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Sports Medicine Australia:

<https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-and-guidelines/infectious-diseases/>

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Equal Rights Commission:

<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/>