

# IHSAA GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF COMMUNICABLE SKIN CONDITIONS IN WRESTLING

The following guidelines are not meant to be all inclusive of what may need to be done to prevent communicable skin conditions from occurring in wrestling. They provide practical suggestions that, when implemented, should help reduce the incidence of communicable skin conditions occurring among high school wrestlers. Some of the guidelines go above and beyond what would normally need to be done to prevent communicable skin conditions from occurring. However, in instances where some wrestlers, or entire teams, seem to be extremely susceptible to communicable 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, shoes and any braces with a disinfectant cleaner** after each practice. Wash/clean shoes, knee pads, head gear once a week.

- 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.**

10/06

# COMMUNICABLE SKIN CONDITIONS

## *(Guidelines for Safe Return to Participation)*

The following information is meant to be used as guidelines for safe return to participation when a wrestler is being withheld from participation due to a communicable skin condition. **Each medical professional must determine a wrestler's readiness to return to participation on an individual basis.**

### HERPES:

**Before returning to participation**, the wrestler should:

1. Be free from any systemic symptoms of viral infection (fever, malaise, etc.), **AND,**
2. Have developed no new blisters for 3 days, **AND,**
3. Have no moist lesions. All lesions must be dry with a FIRM, ADHERENT CRUST, **AND,**
4. Have been using the appropriate dosage of systemic antiviral therapy for at least 5 days.

*Note:* Physicians may want to consider season-long prophylaxis with acyclovir for wrestlers with recurrent herpes.

### IMPETIGO and BOILS (other bacterial infections):

**Before returning to participation**, the wrestler should:

1. Have developed no new lesions in the past 48 hours, **AND,**
2. Have no moist, exudative or draining lesions, **AND,**
3. Have been using the appropriate dosage of antibiotic therapy for at least 3 days.

### RINGWORM:

Before returning to participation, the wrestler should:

1. Not have extensive and active lesions, **AND,**
2. Have been using topical therapy for a minimum of 3 days for skin lesions.
3. For scalp lesions, a wrestler must have been using the appropriate dosage of systemic antifungal therapy for a minimum of 2 weeks.

*Source: NCAA Wrestling Rules, 2005*