

ASSOCIATION OF RINGSIDE PHYSICIANS **FIGHTER RESOURCES**



Skin Infection Prevention for Athletes

As an athlete, maintaining good skin health is essential to ensure optimal performance and prevent infections that can sideline you from your sport. Skin infections are common in athletic settings, but with proper prevention measures, you can reduce the risk significantly. Follow these guidelines to protect yourself from skin infections and keep competing at your best.

Practice Good Hygiene. Shower immediately after practice or competitions using soap and warm water. If immediate showering cannot happen, use anti-septic wipes specifically designed for wrestlers. (Many brands available) These wipes are not to substitute for a shower. You should still shower as soon as you have a chance. Avoid sharing personal items like towels, razors, or clothing with others.

Keep Your Gear Clean. Regularly clean and disinfect your equipment that cannot be laundered with alcohol or a 1:10 bleach to water solution. Wash clothing and uniforms after each use, using hot water and detergent. DO NOT put your dirty clothes back in your gym bag. Use a separate bag to put your dirty clothes in. Always keep your shoes separate from your clothes.

Maintain Proper Skin Care. Keep your skin moisturized to prevent dryness and cracking, which can create entry points for bacteria. Use a mild soap and avoid harsh chemicals that can irritate the skin. Be aware that cosmetic body shaving opens up your skin and increases the risk of infection.

Check for Cuts and Scrapes. Inspect your skin regularly for cuts, abrasions, or open wounds. Cover any cuts with clean bandages before training. Familiarize yourself with symptoms of common skin infections, such as Staph, Ringworm, and Herpes, and seek medical attention if you suspect an infection. If you want to use an over-the-counter, anti-fungal/biotic cream to treat initially that is O.K., but DO NOT go beyond that. NEVER use caustic materials, such as bleach, to self-treat a lesion. You can only make things worse with more serious infections/skin breakdown. You can also make your problem harder to diagnose for healthcare providers. Let your coaches and training partners know if you have a skin infection to prevent its spread



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Use Preventative Medicine. There are some prescription medications that athletes can take to help prevent “ringworm” and “mat herpes” infections. These medicines have been shown to be safe and have extremely low side effect profiles. See your physician if you suspect you have these infections, or if your teammates do, and you want to take medication to reduce the risk of another lesion.

Remember, early detection and proper care are crucial in managing and preventing skin infections. If you suspect an infection or have any concerns about your skin health, consult a healthcare professional promptly.

Disclaimer: This information sheet is for educational purposes only and should not be considered a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult a healthcare provider for personalized guidance on your health concerns.

