

NJSIAA

Infectious Disease Policy

Guidelines for the prevention of serious infectious diseases in high school athletics.



Adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee

June 1, 2005

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY OF THE
NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

Presented by the NJSIAA Medical Advisory Committee
Adopted June 1, 2005 by the NJSIAA Executive Committee

PURPOSE

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Executive Committee has adopted this policy in an effort to minimize the possibility of transmission of any infectious disease during a high school athletic practice or contest.

The policy primarily addresses blood-borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). However, it also discusses Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and commonsense precautions against the spread of less serious infections such as influenza and the common cold.

Much of this policy has been written with contact sports such as football, wrestling, and basketball in mind. However, it is applicable for all sports.

GUIDELINES NOT REGULATIONS

Members schools should understand that this policy contains guidelines with which the NJSIAA Executive Committee strongly recommends each school and officials association comply.

Specifically, however, NJSIAA contest officials will be instructed to monitor situations in athletic contests in which any injury occurs that results in blood being present. Officials will follow the appropriate policy guidelines when those situations do occur. For purpose of emphasis, those guidelines which will be enforced are highlighted in green print.

BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

HBV and **HCV** are blood-borne pathogens. They can cause serious infectious diseases potentially resulting in long-term medical consequences. **HIV** is the virus that causes **AIDS** (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). It is present in blood and other body fluids (semen, vaginal fluids, saliva, and breast milk) of infected persons. It attacks and weakens the immune system, making the individual much more susceptible to infections. Although **HBV** and **HCV** infections are much more common than **HIV**, it is **HIV** and its deadly consequence, **AIDS**, which has heightened public concern over blood-borne pathogens.

HBV and **HCV** can be transmitted into the bloodstream through contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes with blood containing secretions. Compared to **HBV** and **HCV**, the risk of **HIV** transmission during exposure to non-intact skin or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth, etc.) to **HIV** contaminated blood is low. Nonetheless, student-athletes, athletic trainers, coaches, and officials must understand that it is possible for **HBV**, **HCV** or **HIV** to be transmitted from an infected individual to another through non-intact skin or mucous membranes, and standard precautions should be observed whenever blood is present.

Since HBV is a viral infection that can be prevented, all student-athletes are required to be vaccinated against HBV and it is recommended that all coaches, athletic trainers and officials also are vaccinated for HBV.

RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE TRANSMISSION OF BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

Proper handling of situations in which blood is present will greatly reduce the possibility of transmission of a blood-borne pathogen if the individual who is bleeding has such a disease.

Injuries that result in the presence of blood are most likely to occur in physical education classes, athletic practice sessions, and athletic contests. Therefore, it is extremely important that teachers, coaches, officials, athletic trainers, and student athletes observe the following universal precautions. *Precautions are strongly recommended with on and off the field activities.*

1. Before competing, a student-athlete must cover any non-intact skin or his/her body. The entire wound must be covered and any drainage contained.
2. A student-athlete should render personal first aid and cover his/her own wounds whenever possible.
3. When blood, non-intact skin or mucous membranes are involved, those rendering first-aid to others should wear protective gloves (such as latex or synthetic gloves). Individuals should wear clean gloves for each student-athlete treated or when treating the same student-athlete more than one time. Thoroughly wash hands after removal of gloves.
4. If an individual gets someone else's blood on his/her skin, protective gloves should be worn to wipe the blood off with a disposable towel using soap and water.

NOTE: If blood gets on another athlete's uniform during competition or practice, it is not necessary to clean the uniform at that point unless the individual has an open cut or an abraded area, or the blood is on a part of the uniform which might come in contact with mucous membranes. If the student-athlete does have an open cut or an abraded area or believes that the blood might come in contact with mucous membranes, then the uniform should be wiped using soap and water.

5. If a student-athlete begins to bleed during practice or competition, play must be stopped, the injured athlete removed, and any potentially contaminated surfaces, such as the basketball court or wrestling mat, cleaned immediately using an EPA-approved disinfectant such as 1:100 solution of household bleach and water made fresh every 24 hours.
6. A student-athlete who is removed from an athletic practice or contest due to bleeding must have the bleeding stopped and any wound covered before the individual is allowed to return to competition. If the bleeding resumes, it is up to the discretion of the official in charge (i.e. referee or home plate umpire) as to how many times the competition should be stopped before that student-athlete is disqualified from further participation in that contest.
7. Hands should be washed with soap and water, or antiseptic hand cleaner after providing first aid, whether or not protective gloves are worn.
8. A student-athlete should shower with regular soap and hot water after each practice and competition. Anti-bacterial soap should not be used routinely.
9. Towels should never be shared by student-athletes, athletic trainers, coaches, or officials.

NOTE: Disposal towels should be used for all body fluid clean up. Towels, protective gloves, and other materials used in clean up should be placed in a plastic bag within a waste container. Disposal must be in compliance with N.J.P.E.O.S.H.A. standards. Phone (609) 984-1863.

10. All soiled linen such as uniforms and towels should also be washed in hot soapy water. Any

detergent that contains bleach is appropriate.

11. The procedure outlined for student- athletes also applies to athletic trainers, officials, and coaches.
12. All athletic trainers, coaches, officials and student-athletes should practice good hygiene. Towels, cups, and water bottles should not be shared.

OTHER INFECTIONS

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is the resistant form of the common skin organism, Staph Aureus. Both forms can cause skin infections. Transmission can occur through close contact with a person with the organism, if exposed to non-intact skin or mucous membranes. In competitive sports there are factors that can contribute to transmission such as skin trauma, close physical contact, use of equipment that can cause abrasions to the skin, and sharing unclean gear. If a wound is pre- sent, MRSA can be identified by obtaining cultures, but people without wounds or obvious infections can also carry MRSA on their skin.

Infections such as influenza, the common cold, mononucleosis, and herpes are generally transmitted by direct contact with respiratory secretions, saliva, nasal dis- charge or lesions (herpes). This can occur when an infected person sneezes or coughs, or by self-inoculation of mucous membranes from contaminated hands and surfaces. Thus, the chances of becoming infected with one of these viruses is greater in a confined area where individuals are coughing and sneezing without covering their mouths, or when individuals share objects such as cups, water bottles, and eating utensils.

Unlike blood-borne pathogens such as HBV, HCV and HIV, which may have an incubation period of days, weeks and years, colds and influenza usually cause symptoms in a matter of hours not days after they have been acquired. Thus it is unlikely than an individual will carry these infections without knowing they are ill.

Often symptoms of respiratory and gastrointestinal illness, which can include muscle aches, pains in joints, fever, chills, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, will prevent the student-athlete from participating in practice or competition due to the illness.

RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE TRANSMISSION OF OTHER INFECTIONS

The NJSIM recommends the following precautions be taken to prevent the spread of a variety of infections:

1. Student-athletes should not practice or play when a fever is present;
2. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing;
3. Do not share helmets, towels, water bottles or eating utensils;
4. Clean wrestling mats between matches with an EPA-approved disinfectant such as a 1:100 solution of household bleach and water made fresh daily when visibly soiled with a body fluid, and at the end of each practice session or intramural contest; and
5. Keep locker room areas well ventilated.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information concerning the Infectious Disease Policy of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, phone the NJSIM Office at (609)259-2776 or write the NJSIM Office at 1161 Route 130 N., Robbinsville, N. J. 08691.

For more information on HBV, HCV, HIV and AIDS contact your physician, the local county health department, and the New Jersey Department of Health (609)984-6050, the New Jersey Department of Education (609)984-1890, OSHA, Region II (212)337-2378 and OSHA Consultation Program (609)292-0404.

SOURCES: "AIDS Fact Sheet," The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Copyright 1992

"The Risk of Contracting AIDS through Athletic Participation," Iowa High School Athletic Association

"Sports Medicine Manual," The Missouri State High School Activities Association

"AIDS and Intercollegiate Athletics," the NCAA

"Routine for Handling Body Fluids," Michigan High School Athletic Association "You and AIDS," Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services and

Florida High School Activities Association National Athletic Trainers Association "Blood Borne Pathogens Guidelines," American Academy of Pediatrics and the Hepatitis Foundation International.

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