



COMMUNICABLE SKIN CONDITIONS (2007-08 NFHS WRESTLING RULES BOOK)

The transmission of communicable skin conditions is still a major concern in the sport of wrestling. For the third time in six years, the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee has made communicable skin conditions a major Point of Emphasis for the 2007-08 wrestling season. Many rule changes have been implemented in an effort to reduce the spread of these conditions. If the spread of communicable skin conditions is going to be controlled, it will take more than simply rules. It will take every coach addressing the issue of prevention, everyday. Coaches must make it unacceptable for wrestlers to share common towels, to leave school without showering after practice or competition, to wear their practice clothes home, to practice or compete without having a daily skin check, to enter the practice room without wearing clean workout clothes and for mats not to be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner at least once a day.

The following guidelines provide practical suggestions that will help reduce the incidence of communicable skin conditions among wrestlers.

1. Coaches must visit with wrestlers, and their parents, about how to recognize and prevent the most common communicable skin conditions.
2. 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.)
3. Don't allow any wrestler into the practice room without clean practice gear.
4. Launder all towels, practice gear and uniforms after each use. To destroy disease-causing organisms, either use detergent containing bleach or dry all articles in a dryer at the high heat setting.
5. 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.
6. Headgear, shoes and neoprene sleeves and supports should be wiped with a disinfectant cleaner after every use and allowed to air dry.
7. Do not allow wrestlers to share any item of practice gear or use common towels.
8. 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.
9. Wrestlers should keep their fingernails trimmed short to avoid scratching themselves or others, as any opening in the skin increases the risk of infection.
10. Wash wall mats with a disinfectant cleaner on a regular basis (1-2 times weekly).
11. Wipe weight benches with a disinfectant cleaner after each use and/or before the next day's use.
12. 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.
13. Wrestlers, especially those who have experienced communicable skin conditions in the past, should boost their natural immunity to all diseases by eating healthy foods and getting adequate rest. They may also wish to take a multi-vitamin supplement.
14. Coaches or Certified Athletic Trainers should perform daily skin checks on all wrestlers on the team, to catch early outbreaks of a communicable skin condition before it infects fellow teammates or an opponent.

The following guidelines will help reduce the spread of communicable skin conditions, if at least one wrestler is already infected.

1. Wrestlers with any signs of a communicable skin condition must be sent to a physician immediately and **MUST** be withheld from practice until a medical diagnosis and clearance is obtained.
2. Wrestlers with a suspect skin condition must have current written permission from a physician before returning to practice/competition and should have such clearance before being allowed to participate in any way. After receiving physician clearance, it is wise to cover the affected area(s) 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.
3. Wrestlers having lesions from a communicable skin condition on their face or neck should launder their pillow case on a daily basis.
4. Wrestlers with any signs of a communicable skin condition should wash their hands frequently to avoid contaminating themselves, or others.
5. 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 condition to others.