



Sport and Recreation Tasmania
Department of Economic Development

1/3

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES POLICY

November 2004

POLICY STATEMENT ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A number of communicable diseases can potentially be transmitted during body contact through the transfer of body fluids from one person to another via broken skin or mucous membranes. The more serious include blood borne viruses such as hepatitis B and C and HIV

Other bacteria and viruses can be transmitted via saliva, and other secretions from the nose and throat when water bottles, umpire whistles and other similar articles are shared during sporting activities. Potential infections transmitted via this route include whooping cough, influenza and glandular fever. Meningococcal disease is no longer thought to be transmitted via saliva. Whilst it used to be emphasized that behaviours such as sharing drink bottles or whistles were a risk, evidence now indicates that it is prolonged close contact- e.g. families and other groups living together in close quarters-that is more likely to provide the opportunities for spread of meningococcal infection.

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS WILL REDUCE THE RISK OF TRANSMITTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

PLAYERS

1. It is the player's responsibility to maintain strict personal hygiene, as this is the best method of controlling the spread of these diseases.
2. It is strongly recommended that all players involved in contact/collision sport and playing under adult rules, be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
3. It is strongly recommended that if players, umpires or other participants are feeling unwell prior to the sporting event, they should not participate. They should consult the team doctor or their General Practitioner.
4. All players with prior evidence of a communicable disease are strongly advised to obtain advice and clearance from a doctor prior to participation.
5. The practice of spitting on the sports field should not be permitted.

TEAM AREAS

1. It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the dressing rooms be clean and tidy. Particular attention should be paid to hand-basins, toilets and showers. Adequate soap, paper hand towels, brooms, refuse disposal bins and disinfectants must be available at all times.
2. The practices of spitting and urinating in team areas should not be permitted.
3. All clothing, equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood must be treated as potentially infectious and treated accordingly. Blood spills should be dealt with as soon as possible.
4. Sharing of towels, shaving razors, face washers, toothbrushes and drink containers should not occur.
5. It is strongly recommended that all personnel working in contact/collision sport team areas be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
6. In all training areas, open cuts and abrasions must be reported to the coach and treated immediately. Any open areas on the skin should be cleaned thoroughly and covered with a protective dressing prior to play.
7. Players should be supplied with their own water bottles and any other equipment that has the potential to be contaminated with saliva.

REFEREES AND GAME OFFICIALS

1. Officials must report all open cuts and abrasions to medical staff at the first available opportunity. Any open areas on the skin should be cleaned thoroughly and covered with a protective dressing prior to play.
2. It is strongly recommended those who officiate in body contact and collisions sports be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
3. All contaminated clothing and equipment must be replaced prior to the player being allowed to resume play.
4. If bleeding should recur, the above procedures must be repeated.
5. If bleeding cannot be controlled and the wound securely covered, the player must not continue in the game.
6. It is strongly recommended that if players, umpires or other participants are feeling unwell prior to the sporting event, they should not participate. They should consult the team doctor or their General Practitioner.
7. Players, umpires and other participants who are unwell during or after a sporting event should not continue to take part in the event, unless cleared to do so by the team doctor or a General Practitioner.
8. Players, umpires and other participants who have an open cut or ulcerating sore should be seen by a doctor and not take part in a sporting event unless cleared to do so by a doctor
9. Umpires, referees and coaches should be supplied with individual water bottles, whistles and any other equipment that has the potential to be contaminated by saliva. These items must not be shared with another person at any time.

EDUCATION

There is an obligation upon all sporting organisations to provide suitable information on the associated risk factors and prevention strategies against communicable diseases. Additional information may be obtained from team doctors or the Department of Health and Human Services' Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit.

The safe handling of contaminated clothing, equipment and surfaces must be brought to the attention of all players and ancillary staff.

Although hepatitis B vaccination is usually effective in raising immunity to hepatitis B, it provides no protection against other blood-borne diseases such as HIV. Vaccination must not result in any relaxation of hygiene standards.

Further information on many communicable diseases is available on the Public and Environmental Health Service website –

<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/services/view.php?id=722>

or free call 1800 671 738.

Team doctors or your general practitioner will also be able to provide further information.



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