

Guideline on Prevention of Infectious Diseases in Mass Assembly - For Sport Players

Preventing infectious disease in Sports is fundamental to maintaining team effectiveness and helping individual athletes avoid the adverse effects of illness (Howe et al, 2003). The environment in which these athletes compete, practice, receive therapy for injuries, and travel, both domestically and internationally, provide varied opportunities for the transmission of infectious organisms.

To safeguard your health and the health of others, please pay attention to the following health guidelines formulated by the Centre for Health Protection.

1. Maintain Good Personal Hygiene

- Disinfect any broken skin such as cuts or abrasions immediately and cover properly with waterproof adhesive
- Do not share personal items such as towels, clothing, razors or water bottles
- Keeping feet and intertriginous areas dry, frequent changes of absorbent socks, and adequate drying of shoes between uses
- Avoid direct contact with bird droppings or feces of animals without protection
- **Hand Hygiene:**
 - Keep hands clean at all time
 - Keep fingernails short
 - Wash hands frequently with liquid soap and water, rub all surfaces of hands and fingers for at least 20 seconds and then dry with a disposable towel or a hand dryer
 - Always perform hand hygiene particularly:
 - Before eating and touching nose, mouth and eyes
 - After going to toilet, touching public installations or equipments; touching animals or their droppings
 - Rub hands with a disinfectant containing 70-80% alcohol if hands are not visibly soiled and liquid soap and water are not available

2. Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

- Cover the nose / mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Do not spit or litter. Use tissue paper to hold your spit and respiratory secretions, discard them into a bin with a lid. Always put rubbish in a bin. Spitting and littering in public is an offence.
- Perform hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects / materials
- Wear a surgical mask to prevent spread of the disease (only for those with respiratory symptoms)
- Please seek medical advice if you have respiratory symptoms such as:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Sore throat

- Runny nose
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties

3. Prevention of Vector Borne Diseases / Zoonotic Diseases

- Persons walking in high grass or scrub or doing any outdoor activities should wear footwear, loose fitting long-sleeved clothing, and trousers to cover arm, legs and particularly the ankles
- Apply insect repellents according to product instructions, only on clothing and exposed skin. Re-apply within a few hours, as protection wears off from perspiration, particularly on hot nights
- Do not drink untreated water from reservoirs or outdoor water track which may be contaminated
- Minimize exposure to wildlife animals
- Seek for medical advice if you feel unwell

4. Prevention of Community-associated Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA)

- Maintain good personal hygiene as indicated in point 1
- Special attention on wound care and open wound:
 - Train athletes and coaches in first aid for wounds and recognition of wounds that are potentially infected
 - Athletes should report to coaches for any skin lesions
 - Wound should be covered with an occlusive dressing before athletic play
 - Avoid participation in contact sports (sweating can cause a bandage / dressing slippage and lead to contact with equipment and other people)
 - Avoid visiting public gymnasium, bath houses, spa rooms and swimming pools
 - Avoid getting manicures, massages or hair cuts
 - Known CA-MRSA carriers should beware of spreading the germs to people around especially those with skin condition, such as eczema, or fresh surgical wound
- Avoid close contact with skin lesions of other athletes
- Game uniforms / practice clothing should be laundered after use
- Equipment that directly touches skin, such as headgear, must be sanitized daily after use
- Do not share intimate items, such as towel, razor or toothbrush
- Shower rooms should be frequently sanitized
- Changing rooms should be maintained at reasonable hygienic conditions. All surfaces should be cleaned at least daily
- Do not use antibiotic from over the counter without medical professional's advice

The following people are advised not to attend mass assembly:

1. People who feel unwell, especially people who have a fever; or
2. People who have been in close contact with suspected or confirmed
 - SARS patients during the last 10 days
 - Avian Flu patients during the last 7 days

(Close contact means having cared for, having lived with, or having had contact with the respiratory secretions or bodily fluids of an infected person.)

For further information:

- Centre for Health Protection Website: <http://www.chp.gov.hk>
- Dept. of Health's Hong Kong Traveller's Health Service Website: <http://www.info.gov.hk/trhealth>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website: <http://www.cdc.gov>

Reference

Howe WB., Harmon KG. & Rubin A. Preventing Infectious Disease in Sports. Physician & Sportsmedicine 2003; 31(2):23.

Infection Control Branch, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health
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