

What causes skin infections ?

Generally, there are three different types of microorganisms which cause skin infections:



SKIN INFECTIONS ARE CAUSED BY MICROORGANISMS

1. **Viruses** such as human papilloma virus (warts) or herpes simplex virus (cold sores etc.)

2. **Bacteria** such as staphylococcus aureus, responsible for impetigo.

3. **Fungus**, which is responsible for ringworm and other tinea infections.

How do skin infections occur and spread among your teammates?

The most common ways athletes get skin infections from wrestling are:

1. Close skin-to-skin contact with an individual who has an active contagious skin infection.
2. Self-infection via a cut or scrape not being adequately disinfected and becoming infected.
3. Fomites (infectious objects) such as non-sanitized wrestling mats or soiled gym clothes.



For further information about skin-related issues in sport, contact:

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Skin Health and Awareness for Athletes



Facts of Sport

Concussions in hockey and boxing. High-impact trauma in football. Sprained ankles in basketball. Every sport has inherent risks involved with participation. Proper education is essential in order to minimize the chances of sustaining an injury.

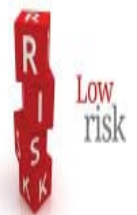


Risks involved with wrestling

Wrestling is a sport which involves close skin-to-skin contact with several different people, on wrestling mats which typically tend to be moist and warm. Additionally, skin abrasions are common occurrences. These two facts put wrestlers at a higher risk of acquiring communicable infectious skin ailments.

How dangerous are these skin infections?

The majority of skin infections acquired through wrestling when treated promptly in healthy young people present very little risk of serious illness.



What can be done to minimize skin infections in wrestling?

All coaches and wrestlers should adhere to the following guidelines to reduce the chances of being affected by contagious skin infections:

1. SHOWERING

*Always shower immediately after practice, preferably with antibacterial soap.

*Always use a fresh towel.

*Wear flip-flops in public showers.



2. SEPARATE BAGS

*Keep used/ sweaty gym clothes in a mesh or plastic bag SEPARATE from your clean wrestling duffel bag and take them home to be washed. Only after they are laundered do you put them in your duffel bag for next practice. Wrestlers must have one bag solely for clean gym equipment and one bag solely for soiled/used gear that needs to be washed.

*Remember to also wash your laundry bag!

3. LAUNDRY

*Wash gym clothes after every use, including knee pads.

*Wipe headgear with sanitizing alcohol.

4. OPEN WOUNDS

*If you have an open wound do not train until it has healed and there is no chance of it re-opening and becoming infected. If you must train or compete with an open wound ensure it is bandaged up properly to minimize risk of it re-opening. It is preferable that this be done by a certified athletic trainer.

*If a skin abrasion happens during wrestling practice, disinfect immediately and cover it up. Do not return to practice with open wounds.

**PREVENTION
IS ALWAYS BETTER
THAN
TREATMENT!**

5. SKIN INFECTIONS

If you have an active communicable skin infection, see a doctor immediately

and do not return to practice or compete until the infection has cleared and you are no longer infectious to others.

6. SHAVING

Avoid needless body shaving as this makes those areas more prone to infections.

7. FINGERNAILS

Keep your nails trimmed to reduce the chances of scratching your training partners.

8. BARRIER FOAM:

Consider using Defense Barrier Foam when competing. These products are especially recommended if the hygiene of the other athletes or the cleanliness of the facilities are in doubt.



9. WRESTLING SHOES

*Sanitize the bottom of your wrestling shoes each time you step on the mat. Avoid walking off the mats in between practice: keep water bottles etc. near the edge so as to avoid walking off the mat with shoes.

*If you must walk off the mats during practices, sanitize your shoes once again before you step on the mats.

*Do *not* wear your wrestling shoes to the washroom or any other areas with questionable sanitation.



10. OTHER EQUIPMENT

Absolutely no sharing of wrestling equipment including head gear and towels.

11. PIMPLES

Avoid picking at scabs or pimples as open wounds are very susceptible to becoming infected.



12. DAILY CHECKS

Be proactive with your skin! Give yourself daily skin checks and see if you feel or spot anything unusual. If you do notice something, report it to your coaches immediately.

FINAL WORDS

Let's be honest here: there is a taboo when it comes to skin conditions in our society, and it's a big taboo. Unfortunately, these attitudes permeate into the realm of wrestling and cause more negative consequences. Sometimes wrestlers who acquire these infections (often at no fault of their own) feel ashamed or "unclean" so they hide their infections and continue training. Think about it! No one feels embarrassed about a dislocated shoulder or a fractured wrist... but a little ringworm? People panic. This embarrassment increases the chances of these infections spreading to others and becoming a bigger problem for the sport of wrestling.

We are not trying to downplay this serious issue, but rather we are attempting to foster a culture which reacts appropriately and proactively. While the taboo surrounding skin infections continues in general society, it has no place in grappling-based sports. After reading this brochure, you are well-educated on the topic of skin infections in wrestling. Together we can spread this knowledge, and work towards destroying this needless taboo in our wrestling community.

And finally....

...good luck and get out there and win some tournaments!