

blood borne infections in sport

Some diseases may be caught through blood contact during sport. These diseases include hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS. The risk is highest if you play high contact sports such as boxing, wrestling or the various football codes.

You can catch these diseases if an infected person's blood gets into a cut or graze on your skin, or in your mouth, nose or eyes. The risk of being infected is very small, but these diseases can make you very sick and can even kill you. It's a good idea to take a few simple safety steps.

For players:

- ◆ **If you get a cut or graze**, treat it yourself, if possible. Tell an official straight away.
- ◆ Make sure **any blood is cleaned up**. Change or clean blood stained clothing straight away.
- ◆ Keep yourself and team areas **clean**.
- ◆ **Never share** drink bottles, towels, razors, mouth guards or other personal items.
- ◆ **Think about getting vaccinated against hepatitis B**.
- ◆ **If you have a blood-borne disease**, you don't have to tell anyone. However, it's a good idea to talk with your doctor before you play contact sport.

For coaches, referees & game officials:

- ◆ **Treat every case of bleeding as if it's infectious – you never know!**
- ◆ **Report all open cuts and grazes** to medical/first aid staff as soon as possible.
- ◆ **Make sure all cuts and grazes are clean and completely covered**.
- ◆ **If you can't stop the bleeding, the player must stop playing** (the *blood rule*).
- ◆ **Don't allow players to carry on playing with blood on their clothes**. Bloody clothes should be kept in plastic bags and washed with hot water and detergent. They must not be worn again unless properly cleaned.
- ◆ **Always wear disposable gloves** when treating bleeding players. Wash your hands with soap and hot water immediately afterwards.
- ◆ Have and use clean **resuscitation bags** or disposable mouth-to-mouth devices if you have to do CPR.
- ◆ **Clean up any blood spills immediately** (see *Team Areas*).
- ◆ **Consider offering hepatitis B vaccinations** to players, coaches, referees and game officials.

Sporting groups must teach their players and officials about blood-borne diseases and their prevention. Use this pamphlet, and make sure everyone knows what to do in case of an injury or blood spill.

You can get extra information from your team doctor, Sports Medicine Australia (WA) or the Health Department of Western Australia.

team areas

Team areas must be kept clean, tidy and dry. Take special care with basins, toilets and showers. Make sure soap, paper towels, rubbish bins and cleaning materials are always on hand.

Wear gloves and use paper towels (or disposable cloths) when cleaning up blood spills. If possible, wash the area with soapy water, then bleach. Wrap towels and gloves in a plastic bag before putting them in the bin.

Regularly wash and bleach massage tables and other areas that come into contact with bare skin. Wear rubber gloves when treating players.

If possible, don't provide communal bathing areas, including spas. **Any player who has cuts or damaged skin must not share bathing areas.**

hepatitis b vaccination

The chance of catching any of these diseases is very low. On the other hand, they are very serious diseases.

Fortunately, while hepatitis B is more infectious than many other diseases, there is a hepatitis B vaccination.

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for any adults involved in contact sports, both players and officials. Talk about it with your doctor.

For more information & training contact:

Sports Medicine Australia (WA)

☎ (08) 9285 8033

web: <http://www.sport.net.au/smawa/>

e-mail: info@smawa.asn.au

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