

BLOOD & INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Policy has been adapted from the Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) Infectious Diseases Policy. This Policy also contains other references for clubs, parents and gymnasts, which are linked below.
- 1.2. Individuals and sporting organisations/clubs have the responsibility of playing their part in preventing the spread of infection through participation in sport. Athletes, officials, coaches, sports trainers and first aiders can be blood aware by following some simple guidelines and encouraging each other to do likewise.
- 1.3. Due to the number of gymnasts using equipment during training and competition sessions, it is important that gymnasts, parents, coaches and other support staff are aware of this Policy and follow the recommendations as they relate to the training or competition environment.

2. HOW INFECTIONS CAN SPREAD THROUGH SPORT

- 2.1. A number of infectious diseases can be transmitted during close contact, body contact and contact with blood and body fluids.
- 2.2. Diseases which may spread through close contact include influenza, common colds, gastroenteritis and skin infections. These diseases may be spread by droplet spread (coughing, sneezing), direct contact between broken skin or mucous membranes and sharing of cutlery or drink bottles.
- 2.3. Skin infestations such as lice or ticks may be spread by sharing of infected clothing, towels and bedding.
- 2.4. Diseases that may be spread by contact with blood and body fluids include serious conditions such as hepatitis and HIV. Transmission of these infections may have serious health consequences for any person infected.
- 2.5. In Gymnastics, the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) policy is that direct person-to-person transfer of blood-borne infection, whilst not impossible, does not require practical consideration in the sport of gymnastics.

3. RISK OF INFECTION THROUGH SPORT

- 3.1. The risk of being infected by one of the serious blood-borne viruses through participation in sport is very low.
- 3.2. By adopting a Blood and Infectious Diseases Policy and implementing other preventive strategies consistently, the risks are even lower.
- 3.3. Most contact with other people doesn't lead to the transmission of an infection. In order for an infection to be transmitted from one person to another all of the following must occur:
 - a) the organism (virus, bacteria, fungi or parasite) must be in or on a person's body and still be able to be transmitted;

- b) the organism must leave the body of the person who has the virus;
- c) the organism must be able to survive in the environment;
- d) the organism must find its way onto or into another person; and
- e) the organism must be in sufficient quantity to infect that person.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. General

- a) All blood and body fluids should be treated as though they are potentially infectious. When spills of blood or other body fluids happen:
 - i. avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids;
 - ii. cover any cuts on your hands with a Band Aid;
 - iii. wear gloves
- b) If blood or other body fluids spill onto you or someone else or if contact has been made with an open wound, broken skin or mucous membranes (mouth, eyes) the following precautions are recommended:
 - i. wash the area of contact thoroughly with soap and warm water;
 - ii. if the blood contacted your mouth or eyes, rinse very well with water;
 - iii. see your own doctor as soon as possible.

4.2. Participants

- c) Personal hygiene is the responsibility of each participant, including gymnasts, coaches, judges and support personnel.
 - i. Participants should wash hands thoroughly (for 30 seconds) and use hand sanitiser:
 - after using the toilet and blowing their nose
 - before eating / handling food
 - after shaking hands, touching shared utensils and public surfaces i.e. rails, handles etc.
- d) It is recommended that all gymnasts are vaccinated against Hepatitis B. This is part of the National Immunisation Schedule, and children born in Australia will have been offered this vaccination at birth and in the first year of life. There is currently no vaccination available for HIV/AIDS.
- e) All participants with prior evidence of any serious communicable diseases are strongly advised to obtain confidential medical advice and clearance from a doctor prior to participation.
- f) Gymnasts should wear clothing to cover any areas of skin infection that may come into contact with apparatus or cover the area with a secure dressing.

- g) Gymnasts with high temperature ($>38^{\circ}\text{C}$) should not attend the gym or participate in training or competition.
- h) If a gymnast sustains an injury that results in bleeding, he or she should stop the bleeding and cover the wound as soon as possible. Clothing contaminated with blood should be changed or cleaned.
- i) Sharing of towels, shaving razors, face washers and drink containers must NOT occur.

4.3. Clubs

- a) It is the club's responsibility to ensure that the dressing rooms are clean and tidy. Particular attention should be paid to hand-basins, toilets and showers. Adequate soap, paper hand towels, brooms, rubbish disposal bins and disinfectants (including antibacterial wipes) must be available at all times.
- b) All clothing, equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood must be treated as potentially infectious. Equipment and surfaces should be cleaned immediately if soiling or spills occur.
- c) When cleaning up blood and body substances:
 - i. gloves should be worn;
 - ii. if the spill is large, confine and contain the spill (i.e. try not to let it run everywhere);
 - iii. remove as much blood and body substance as possible with absorbent material, e.g. paper towels;
 - iv. place the paper towels in a sealed plastic bag and dispose with normal garbage. Clean the spill site with a disinfectant detergent solution, or single use disinfectant wet wipes
 - v. routine laundry procedures are adequate for the processing of all linen. Routine washing procedures using hot water and detergents are adequate for decontamination of most laundry items. Therefore, clothing with dried blood on it can, if necessary, be soaked in cold water only to release the blood prior to a normal hot detergent wash;
 - vi. gloves should be worn when handling or washing soiled linen. General utility gloves, i.e. rubber household gloves, can be used for this task. The gloves should be washed in detergent after use, or discarded if they are peeled, cracked, discoloured, torn, punctured or have other evidence of deterioration; and
 - vii. contaminated linen soiled with blood or body substances should be transported in a leak-proof plastic bag to the laundry site to contain the body fluid and stop it spreading to the other laundry items. Contaminated linen does not need to be segregated in the hot detergent wash.
- d) Where a participant has come into contact with bodily fluid and there is concern about infection, medical advice should be sought from a physician or clinic where there is experience in the management of infectious diseases.
- e) Blood transmitted infections such as Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS have only been considered to theoretically occur if there is:

- i. direct contact with blood from a bleeding source, or
- ii. an open wound on the other person, for entry into that other person.

5. GYMNASTICS AUSTRALIA COMPETITION BLOOD POLICY

- 5.1. It is the Policy of Gymnastics Australia (GA) that all possible attempts shall be made to prevent cross-infection, via blood or other body fluids, from occurring from person to person during gymnastic events.
- 5.2. In Gymnastics, circumstances might arise where bleeding occurs and contaminates an apparatus. In such cases, the following should occur:
 - a) When a gymnast notices bleeding, he/she should seek medical attention to stop the bleeding and cover the wound as soon as possible, or immediately when directed by Floor Management and/or Medical Staff. If the gymnast is non-compliant, the Floor Manager/Competition Director shall be notified, and the gymnast shall be required to leave the competition/training area.
 - b) A gymnast with a bleeding wound will not be able to resume competition or training until appropriate medical attention has been given, and the wound deemed to be safe for return to the apparatus, to the satisfaction of the Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer.
 - c) Any area of blood on the gymnast's clothing will need to be cleaned or covered, or the clothing changed, to the satisfaction of the Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer as applicable. If the gymnast is non-compliant, the Floor Manager/Competition Director shall be notified, and the gymnast may be required to leave the competition/training area until compliance is satisfactory.
 - d) Blood on an apparatus should be cleaned as soon as possible, with the appropriate disinfectant solution (as recommended by current medical practice), to the satisfaction of the Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer as applicable.
 - e) If an apparatus, or a section of an apparatus cannot be cleaned satisfactorily, the piece of apparatus may need to be replaced. Consultation should occur between the Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer as applicable and the Floor Manager/Competition Director.
- 5.3. A person designated by the event organiser shall be responsible for having appropriate cleaning solution and implements in the venue, with protective gloves, and bags for disposal of waste products, as per acceptable medical procedure.
- 5.4. Should a bleeding incident occur during competition, cleaning of an apparatus should be performed as a priority, before the competition can continue. However, consideration needs to be given to other circumstances, such as progression of the event and not causing any unnecessary delay, appearance to the audience and safety of the other gymnasts and personnel. Consultation will be required between the Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer as applicable and the Floor Manager/Competition Director.

- 5.5. If a significant bleeding injury occurs during a routine, the Head Judge for that apparatus, the Floor Manager, Competition Director and/or Chief Medical Officer (or his/her deputy) or First Aid Officer, shall have the authority to stop the routine and have the gymnast seek immediate medical attention and proceed as per above.

6. CHANGES TO THE POLICY

- 6.1. Changes to this policy may be submitted by the GA Board, State Associations and National Sports Management Committees (SMC) for review and approval by the GA CEO. Once a change has been approved, the policy will be updated in the official GA policy register and on the GA website and circulated to the GA Board, State Associations and relevant SMC.

7. REFERENCES

Sports Medicine Australia.

<https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-and-guidelines/infectious-diseases/>

The National Immunisation Program Schedule (2019):

<https://beta.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule>