

WRAS Sporting Spirit



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Let's get personal – Hygiene for athletes

An unavoidable outcome of training and competing for athletes is sweating, getting dirty and the possibility of cuts and abrasions. Individually these things may not be important, but in a team environment they can quickly lead to the development and spread of infection, making athletes and their team mates sick and preventing them from being able to perform at their best. One of the most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from illness is good personal hygiene. In addition to increasing your chances of getting sick and not allowing you to play sport, poor personal hygiene can negatively impact on your personal, school and work life. Simple personal hygiene steps we can all take to include making sure our equipment such as clothing (including protective clothing such as shin pads and mouth guards) and drink bottles are thoroughly cleaned after each use. As an athlete it is also important that you wash regularly (ideally as soon as possible after training or competition) to reduce the risk of infection from perspiration, contact with other athletes or playing surfaces (such as water based hockey fields). Additional measures that need to be employed in a team environment include not sharing towels or articles of clothing, shaving razors, face washes, drink containers or eating utensils and reporting all open cuts and abrasions to the coach so they can be treated immediately. By following these guidelines you will assist in maintaining the health and performance of yourself and your team. Some specific conditions that may be important to athletes are described below:-

Body Odour

Is caused by a number of factors working in combination, including, chemicals in sweat, waste excrete through the skin, the actions of bacteria that live on the skin and feed on dead skin cells and sweat and unwashed clothes, such as underwear and socks. For athletes a major cause of body odour is perspiration as the body has nearly two million sweat glands and they are most active during exercise. Fresh perspiration, when allowed to evaporate does not cause body odour. An offensive smell is caused when bacteria that are present on the skin get to work on the sweat and decompose it. This is specially so in the groin, underarms, feet or in clothing that has absorbed sweat. Diet and some health problems can influence the odour too. Management of this condition in addition to regular washing, involves – deodorants or antiperspirants. Most commercial skin deodorants contain an antiperspirant, such as aluminium chloride, which reduces sweating by forming a hydroxide gel in the sweat ducts, however, the addition of perfumes only masks the odour. An alternative is deodorant soaps which do not interfere with sweat secretion, but destroy the bacteria that causes body odour.



Tinea

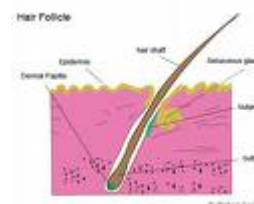
Is a fungal infection that commonly effects the feet, groin, underarms and between the toes of athletes. The area may appear as red, inflamed, raw and the skin may be peeling away. The area may also be very itchy and stinging. Management involves -

- Good hygiene
- DO NOT share towels, shirts, socks or any article of clothing
- If tinea is on the feet the athlete must wear thongs or an equivalent in the shower
- Anti – fungal powders, creams, solutions and sprays are available over the counter from a chemist

Folliculitis

Folliculitis an infection at the site of the hair follicle. Symptoms include a slight red rash to small pustules at each hair follicle. A pustule is a small pimple like elevation on the skin that contains pus. Folliculitis is usually caused from massage of hairy areas, waxing and chafing. Management of this condition involves –

- If the symptoms are mild wash the area with anti bacterial solution – the rash should settle quickly
- If infection is moderate to severe – that is, each hair follicle is very red, inflamed and/or has pustules present then visit your doctor
- The area should be covered with a non-adhesive dressing when training or competing
- Do not massage or rub the area until infection has settled



Favourite recipes – Lamb pasta with Vegetables and Fetta

You will need:

- 500 g bowtie pasta
- 1 cup corn kernels
- olive oil spray
- 400 g trim lamb fillets
- 1 red onion
- 1 red capsicum
- 1 cup green beans
- 2 zucchini
- 150 g button mushrooms
- 1 punnet cherry tomatoes
- 60 g feta cheese, crumbled



Cook pasta according to packet instructions. Spray a large nonstick frypan or wok with oil and heat.

Cut lamb into strips and cook the lamb for 2-3 minutes or until browned and cooked through. Transfer to a plate, cover loosely with foil, and stand for 5 minutes.

Reheat frying pan (spray again, if needed) and cook corn, onion, capsicum, beans, zucchini and mushroom for 3 minutes. Add tomato, stirfry for another 2 minutes.

When cooked, drain pasta and return to the saucepan. Add vegetables and lamb, and stir. Serve topped with crumbled feta cheese.

Overtraining – when it becomes too much?

Enhancing performance requires a fine balance between overload and recovery. If an athlete continually trains without sufficient rest overtraining can occur. Overtraining can also occur when athletes try too hard to improve performance and train beyond the body's ability to recover. Overtraining causes a state of physical, chemical and mental imbalance.

Signs of Overtraining

The first sign of overtraining is a general feeling of staleness in the athlete, and includes:

- decrease in training capacity/intensity
- sudden drop in ability to run 'normal' distance or times
- muscle pain/body aches
- headaches
- moody, easily irritated
- decreased or disturbed sleep
- depression
- loss of competitive desire
- loss of enthusiasm for the sport
- decreased appetite
- insatiable thirst, dehydration
- increased incidence of injuries.
- washed-out feeling, tired, drained, lack of energy
- lowered resistance to common illnesses; colds, sore throat, etc.
- inability to relax, twitchy, fidgety



Treating Overtraining Syndrome

The best treatment for the overtraining syndrome is rest. Usually the longer the overtraining has occurred the more rest is required. Therefore, early detection is very important. If the overtraining has only occurred for a short period of time (eg 3-4 weeks) then interrupting training for 3-5 days is usually sufficient rest. After this, training can be resumed on an alternate day basis.

Prevention of Overtraining

Here are a few ways to prevent the occurrence or reoccurrence of overtraining:

- Identify factors in your exercise routine that could lead to overtraining and make appropriate changes
- Train alternate days to allow your body time to recover properly
- Maintain the intensity of training but lower the volume
- Substitute an alternate form of exercise so you are not continually working the same muscle groups and prevents boredom eg playing touch football one afternoon instead of going to the gym for a cardio session
- Consider having one or two sessions with a massage therapist to help flush metabolic wastes out of your system and help loosen up
- Identify recovery strategies that suit you and your body and enhance your overall feeling of well being

What do I do if I have some of these Warning Signs?

If you're suffering from several of these warning signs go see your physician so that any potentially serious problem can be ruled out.

Otherwise, just stop & rest, take a few days off. Drink plenty of fluids, check & alter your diet if necessary. You can also talk to you S&C intern about your training schedule and work out ways you can do things differently

Remember if you suffer an injury during training, just remember RICER and NO HARM, this could save you a lot of pain, discomfort, and a long recuperative time.

Adapted from Sports Medicine Web Site