

Communicable Diseases

Communities, Sport and Recreation's Communicable Diseases Policy provides recommendations for organisations to follow in order to reduce the risk of communicable diseases for participants, officials and clubs.

What is a communicable disease?

A communicable disease (also known as infectious disease) is an illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products that arises through transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal or inanimate reservoir (for example, from a food source or contaminated water) to a susceptible host.

How are communicable diseases transmitted?

Communicable diseases can potentially be transmitted during sporting contact through the transfer of body fluids from one person to another via broken skin or mucous membranes.

The more serious communicable diseases include blood borne viruses such as Hepatitis B and C and HIV.

However, other bacteria and viruses can also be transmitted via saliva and other secretions from the nose and throat, such as influenza, glandular fever and whooping cough.

Why is it important that sport and recreation organisations are aware of the risks?

Given that some sport and recreation activities involve close contact, it is important that sport and recreation organisations are aware of specific strategies that can be employed to minimise the risk of participants transmitting communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases policy

The communicable diseases policy on the following page sets out recommendations that participants, officials and clubs should follow in order to reduce the risk of communicable diseases being transmitted. It is advisable that sport and recreation clubs adopt such a policy, make it known to members and advertise it around the club.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, including how to safely handle contaminated clothing, equipment and surfaces, see Sports Medicine Australia's Infectious Diseases Policy available at <https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-and-guidelines/infectious-diseases/>

The Department of Health's Public Health Services unit also welcome enquiries relating to communicable diseases by phone on 1800 671 738.

Current as at August 2019

Example: Communicable Diseases Policy



This policy sets out recommendations that participants, officials and the club should follow in order to reduce the risk of communicable diseases being transmitted.

Participants

- Should maintain strict personal hygiene at all times, within and outside of the activity, as this is the most effective means of controlling the spread of communicable diseases.
- Involved in contact sports should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- With prior evidence of a communicable disease should obtain advice and clearance from a doctor prior to participation.
- Should refrain from spitting on the playing surface.
- Should use only their own drink bottles and any other equipment that has the potential to be contaminated by saliva, and should not share these items with others at any time.
- Should not participate if they are feeling unwell prior to an event.

Officials

- Should not participate if they are feeling unwell prior to an event.
- Must report all open cuts and abrasions to medical staff at the first available opportunity.
- If involved in body contact sports should be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- Should only use their own whistles, drink bottles and any other equipment that has the potential to be contaminated by saliva, and should not share these items with others at any time.
- Must ensure all contaminated clothing and equipment is replaced prior to play resuming.
- Must ensure wounds are securely covered before a player continues in a game.
- Must not let a player continue in a game if bleeding cannot be controlled and the wound cannot be securely covered.

Clubs

- Are responsible for ensuring change rooms are clean and tidy, in particular toilets, hand basins and showers.
- Should ensure an adequate supply of soap, paper towel, refuse disposal bins and disinfectant are available at all times.
- Should not permit the practices of spitting or urinating in team areas.
- Should ensure surfaces, clothing and equipment contaminated by blood are treated as potentially infectious and cleaned up accordingly and as soon as possible.
- Should not permit the sharing of razors, towels, face washers, toothbrushes or drink bottles.
- Should ensure any members involved in contact sports are vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Should ensure a first aid kit is fully stocked and easily accessible at all times.
- Should ensure cuts and abrasions are treated immediately.
- Have a responsibility to provide their members with information about the risk factors and prevention strategies associated with communicable diseases.

Need more information?

For more information, including how to safely handle contaminated clothing, equipment and surfaces, see Sports Medicine Australia's Infectious Diseases Policy available at <https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-and-guidelines/infectious-diseases/>

The Department of Health's Public Health Service unit also welcome enquiries relating to communicable diseases by phone on 1800 671 738.