

PROTECT YOURSELF

How to Avoid Common Skin Conditions in Sports

Skin diseases are common among athletes for several reasons, including environmental factors, trauma to the skin, close quarters and sometimes questionable hygiene practices. There are three types of skin diseases: fungal, viral and bacterial. If you suspect you or someone else has a skin infection, see a physician for treatment options as soon as possible.

FUNGAL INFECTIONS

Caused by dermatophytes—fungal organisms that live in soil and on animals and humans.

Tinea capitis: A fungal infection of the scalp that looks like gray, scaly patches and can be accompanied by mild hair loss.

Tinea corporis (aka "ring worm"): A fungal infection of the body that features a ring-like appearance.

Tinea cruris (aka "jock itch"): A fungal infection of the groin area consisting of well-defined red patches.

Tinea pedis (aka "athlete's foot"): A fungal infection of the feet that has the appearance of red scales.

VIRAL INFECTIONS

Caused by the herpes simplex virus and molluscum contagiosum virus.

Herpes simplex virus: A painful recurring infection consisting of clusters of small fluid-filled sacs on a base of red skin.

Molluscum contagiosum: A highly infectious viral disease caused by the poxvirus that features smooth flesh-colored, dome-shaped bumps with a depression in the center.

BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

Caused by various gram-positive strains of streptococcus and staphylococcus aureus (staph a.) bacteria.

Impetigo: A bacterial infection caused by staph a. commonly affecting the face. It consists of thin-walled sacs of fluid that rupture into a honey-colored crust.

Folliculitis: A superficial infection of the hair follicles characterized by redness, fluid- or pus-filled sacs at the base of hair follicles.

Furunculosis: A deeper infection of the hair follicle characterized by inflamed nodules that drain fluid.

Carbuncle: When furunculosis nodules join together to form larger nodules.

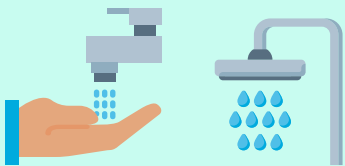
Methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA):

A strain of staph a. that has acquired a specific gene, making it resistant to common antibiotic therapy. It has the appearance of any other bacterial infection with small pustules and abscesses, and is commonly confused for a spider bite.

MRSA is highly infectious and anyone suspected of having a MRSA infection should immediately be isolated and seen by a physician.

SKIN DISEASE PREVENTION BASICS

Follow good hygiene practices, such as frequently washing hands or showering after every sports activity.



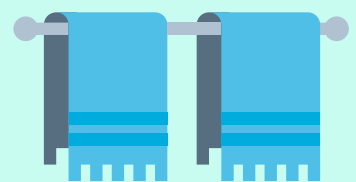
Wash hands and body with antimicrobial soap.



Refrain from cosmetic body shaving.



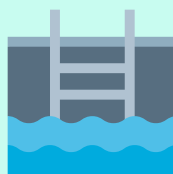
Don't share towels, athletic gear, water bottles, disposable razors or hair clippers.



Laundry and/or disinfect all clothing and sports equipment daily.



Avoid whirlpools and common tubs if you have an open wound, scrape or scratch.



Inspect your skin daily and report any suspicious areas to your athletic trainer or physician. This includes abrasions, cuts and skin lesions.

