



CONFIRMATION OF HERPES GLADIATORUM

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Local Health Departments, School Nurses and School Athletic Directors

FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, Commissioner and State Health Officer, Bureau for Public Health, WVDHHR

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LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, SCHOOL NURSES AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO SCHOOL AND PRIMARY CARE PERSONNEL

Several clinically diagnosed Herpes gladiatorum (HG) cases have been reported among high school athletes with onset before and after the WV State Wrestling Tournament that was held from February 25-27, 2016. First episodes of HG among athletes competing in contact sports should be confirmed through appropriate laboratory testing. After a diagnosis is made, standard guidelines are available to support patient management:

http://www.nfhs.org/media/1014740/sports_related_skin_infections_position_statement_and_guidelines-april-2013.pdf

HG is caused by herpes simplex type 1 virus, and spread by skin-to-skin contact. Athletes with a first episode of HG should be excluded from contact sports until all lesions have well-adherent scabs, no new vesicles have formed in the preceding 48 hours and there are no swollen lymph glands adjacent to affected areas of the skin. Because of the risk of recurrent HG infections, some experts recommend preventive antiviral therapy for athletes with HG throughout the remainder of the season or throughout the career of the athlete. See the guidelines referenced above for additional information.

HG can be confused with fungal infections such as ringworm or tinea corporis; or staphylococcal infections such as impetigo, folliculitis, carbuncles or furuncles. All of these infections can spread readily among athletes, but treatment, prevention and control measures differ by diagnosis.

Sports teams are strongly encouraged to identify a single primary care provider who will commit to evaluating all members of an athletic team for skin conditions, if necessary. A single diagnosis can impact the entire competitive career of the athlete as well as the health and participation of all team members.

Health departments should be familiar with guidelines for management of sports team skin infection outbreaks available at: <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/ob/Pages/OutbreakToolkits.aspx> Physicians and athletic trainer guidelines are available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2902037/pdf/i1062-6050-45-4-411.pdf> For more information, contact your local health department or Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1 (800) 423-1271, ext. 1 or (304) 558-5358, ext. 1.

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