



Gymnastics
Australia

BLOOD AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

Policy Name:	Blood and Infectious Disease Policy
Date of Approval:	21 February 2010
Policy Coverage:	Events
Date of Review:	

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been adapted from the Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) Infectious Diseases Policy (1) which is available from the website listed in the links below, along with other references for clubs, parents and gymnasts.

2. THE POLICY

A number of infectious diseases can be transmitted during close contact, body contact and contact with blood and body fluids in the gymnastics environment.

Diseases spread by 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.

Skin infestations such as lice or ticks may be spread by sharing of infected clothing, towels and bedding.

Diseases that may be spread by contact with blood and body fluids include the more severe viral infections such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. Transmission of these infections may be extremely debilitating and potentially disastrous for the team and/or individual. However, in the sport of Gymnastics, FIG policy is that direct person-to-person transfer of blood-borne infection, whilst not impossible, does not require practical consideration.

Due to the number of gymnasts using the equipment during the same session, 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 club or competition environment.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Gymnasts

3.1.1 Personal hygiene – this is the responsibility of each participant.

3.1.2 Vaccination – it is recommended that all gymnasts are vaccinated against Hepatitis B. This is part of the National Immunisation Schedule (2) 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

3.1.3 All participants with prior evidence of these diseases are strongly advised to obtain confidential advice and clearance from a doctor prior to participation.

- 3.1.4 Clothing – 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.
- 3.1.5 Fever – gymnasts with high temperature (>38 °C) should not attend the gym.
- 3.1.6 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.

3.2 Clubs

- 3.2.1 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 must be available at all times.
- 3.2.2 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.

When cleaning up blood and body substances:

- 3.2.2.1 Gloves must be worn;
- 3.2.2.2 If the spill is large, confine and contain the spill (ie try not to let it run everywhere);
- 3.2.2.3 Remove the bulk of the blood and body substance with absorbent material, eg. paper towels;
- 3.2.2.4 Place the paper towels in a sealed plastic bag and dispose with normal garbage. Clean the spill site with a detergent solution;
- 3.2.2.5 Wipe the site with disposable towels soaked in warm water and detergent. If there is blood contamination on porous surfaces such as carpet, leather and material covered apparatus, then flood the contaminated area with the water and detergent solution and absorb excess fluid with paper towels. A solution of 1:10 bleach and water may be used. (3)
- 3.2.2.6 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.
- 3.2.2.7 Gloves should be worn when handling or washing soiled linen. General utility gloves, ie 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.

3.2.2.8 Contaminated linen soiled with blood or body substances should be transported in a leak-proof plastic bag to the laundry site simply 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.

3.2.3 Sharing of towels, shaving razors, face washers and drink containers must NOT occur.

3.2.4 It is strongly recommended that all personnel working in contact/collision sport team areas should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

Where there is an additional concern about infection, medical advice should be sought from a physician or clinic where there is experience in the management of HIV infection.

It should be remembered that these types of infections, via the blood, have ONLY been felt to theoretically occur, if there is:

1. DIRECT CONTACT with blood from a bleeding source, and
2. An OPEN WOUND on the other person, for entry into that other person.

4 GYMNASTICS AUSTRALIA COMPETITION BLOOD POLICY

It is the policy of **Gymnastics Australia** that all possible attempts shall be made to prevent cross-infection, via blood or other body fluids, from occurring from person/gymnast to person/gymnast during gymnastic Events.

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.

However, in gymnastics, circumstances might arise where bleeding occurs and contaminates apparatus. In such cases, the following should occur:

4.1 When a gymnast notices bleeding, he/she should make every effort to 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 not, the **Floor Manager/Competition Director** shall be notified and the gymnast shall be required to leave the Competition/Training Area.

4.2 A gymnast, with a bleeding wound, shall not be able to resume Competition or Training until appropriate medical attention has been given, and the area of bleeding deemed to be safe for return to the apparatus, to the satisfaction of the **Chief Medical Officer** (or his/her deputy).

- 4.3 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). If not, the **Floor Manager/Competition Director** shall be notified and the gymnast may be required to leave the area until compliance is satisfactory.
- 4.4 Blood on 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).
- 4.5 If apparatus, or section of 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) and the **Floor Manager/Competition Director**.
- 4.6 A person designated by the **Organising Committee** 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.
- 4.7 Should a bleeding incident occur during Competition, cleaning of apparatus should be performed as a priority, before any continuation can occur. 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) and the **Floor Manager/Competition Director**.
- 4.8 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), shall have the authority to stop the routine and have the gymnast seek immediate medical attention and proceed as per above.

It should be remembered that these types of infections, via the blood, have ONLY been felt to theoretically occur, if there is:

3. DIRECT CONTACT with blood from a bleeding source, and
4. an OPEN WOUND on the other person, for entry into that other person.

There is no proven case of such infection having ever occurred in a sporting situation.

5 CHANGES TO THE POLICY

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

In addition, Gymnastics Australia is committed to ensuring all policies are up-to-date and reflect current practices. The latest review date is recorded at the beginning of each policy.

WORKS CITED

Sports Medicine Australia. Infectious Diseases Policy. [Online] Jul 1997.
<http://sma.org.au/resources/policies/infectious-diseases/>.

Australian Government, Dept Health and Ageing. National Immunisation Program Schedule. [Online]
<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/nips2>.

Victorian Government, Department of Health, Communicable Diseases Section. *Blue Book*. [Online] Jan 2008. <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/bluebook>.