



Infectious Diseases Policy

Aim

This policy aims to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

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1 Background

This policy is based on the guidelines provided by Sports Medicine Australia – SA and will be reviewed regularly and updated accordingly.

It is strongly recommended that all contact or collision sports team physicians, other sports medicine staff, coaches, referees, team managers, administrators, players and their parents be informed of this policy and adopt its common sense recommendations.

A number of infectious diseases can be transmitted during body contact and collision sports. The more serious include Hepatitis and HIV infections. These diseases may be spread by contact with infected:

- Blood;
- Saliva (not for HIV);
- Perspiration (not for HIV); and
- Other bodily fluids.

All open cuts and abrasions must be reported and treated immediately.

2 Revision

This policy is to be maintained and reviewed by the AUSC Committee.

3 Application

This policy applies to all members.

4 Player responsibilities

- It is the players' responsibility to maintain strict personal hygiene, as this is the best method of controlling the spread of relevant diseases.
- It is strongly recommended that all participants, involved in sport and playing under adult rules, be vaccinated for Hepatitis B.
- Players with prior evidence of these infections must obtain clearance from a doctor prior to participation.
- The practices of spitting and urinating in team areas must not be permitted.
- Sharing of towels, face washers and drink containers must not occur.
- All personnel working in team areas should be vaccinated for Hepatitis B.
- In all training areas, open cuts and abrasions must be reported to the coach and/or training manager and treated immediately.

5 First aid availability

- At all club activities/events, an adequate first aid kit will be available (e.g. on boat for club dives, onshore for shore/jetty dives, or at the pool venue for underwater hockey/rugby).
- A member with Senior First Aid Certificate will be present where possible.
- All clothing, equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood must be treated as potentially infectious and treated accordingly.

6 Venue requirements

- Venue dressing rooms should be clean and tidy.

- Particular attention should be paid to hand basins, toilets and showers.
- Adequate soap, paper hand towels, brooms and disinfectants must be available at all times.
- Communal bathing areas (e.g. spas) are strongly discouraged.

7 Referees and game official responsibilities

- In competitive environments with referees or game officials, should referees or game officials see any open cuts or abrasions on any player, they must stop play at the first available opportunity (within the rules of the game) and allow the player to be treated. This may mean the player leaves the field of play to be treated.
- Those who officiate in body contact and collision sports should be vaccinated for Hepatitis B.
- All contaminated clothing and equipment must be replaced prior to the player being allowed to resume play.
- If bleeding should occur, the above procedures must be reported.
- If bleeding cannot be controlled and the wound securely covered, the player must not continue in the game.

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.

8 Induction

AUSC will induct all members advising them of the safe handling of contaminated clothing, equipment and surfaces, and also must be brought to the attention of all other volunteers, players and ancillary staff (if applicable).

9 References

AU Sport – *Infectious Diseases Policy*, approved by AU Sport Board on 14 July 2014,
<http://www.theblacks.com.au/Common/Filer.ashx?FID=4299>.

Better Health Channel – *HIV, hepatitis and sport*,
[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcvpdf.nsf/ByPDF/HIV_AIDS_hepatitis_and_sport/\\$File/HIV_AIDS_hepatitis_and_sport.pdf](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcvpdf.nsf/ByPDF/HIV_AIDS_hepatitis_and_sport/$File/HIV_AIDS_hepatitis_and_sport.pdf).

10 Document control

Revision (Date)	Person	Comments
0 (13/10/2015)	Author: David Warren Reviewed: Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2015) Approved: David Warren	Document released to club membership.

Appendix A HIV, hepatitis and sport article



Fact sheet

HIV, hepatitis and sport

People with HIV or hepatitis B or C participate in a wide range of sports without restrictions. The risk that a player infected with one of these blood-borne viruses (BBVs) will spread it to other players is extremely small. For example, there are no documented cases of transmission of HIV from one athlete to another during participation in a sporting event.

It is unlawful to prevent a person infected with HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C from participating in sport. Infection control guidelines or the 'blood rule' help keep all sportspeople, coaches, trainers and officials from a range of infections including these blood-borne viruses.

How HIV and hepatitis B and C are spread

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) damages the immune system and can cause acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) if untreated. Hepatitis B and C are viruses that can cause serious damage to the liver.

To become infected with HIV or hepatitis B or C while playing sports, body fluids such as blood from an infected person needs to enter your bloodstream through a significant abrasion (cut) on your skin or mucous membranes (mouth or eyes).

HIV and hepatitis B are spread in similar ways. Because both HIV and hepatitis B are found in blood, semen and vaginal fluids, these infections are transmitted by:

- unprotected anal, vaginal or oral sex (without a condom or dam) with an infected person
- sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment with an infected person
- mother to baby during childbirth or breastfeeding.

Hepatitis C is spread through blood-to-blood transmission only, but is not thought to be sexually transmitted unless blood is present.

Chronic hepatitis B infection

People with hepatitis B can develop mild, unobserved or severe illness. In most cases, the person clears the infection and they become immune. However, a small percentage of those infected will have chronic hepatitis and be potentially infectious to others, as they do not naturally clear the infection themselves.

Infection of HIV and hepatitis during sport

The risk of catching HIV or hepatitis B or C from an infected player is:

- extremely low for other athletes and players involved in contact sports
- extremely low for first aid officers who follow infection control guidelines
- unlikely for coaches, trainers, officials and spectators.

HIV and hepatitis B or C cannot be caught from:

- sweat or saliva from other sportspeople
- sharing drink bottles with team members
- shared toilets, showers or spas
- hugging or shaking hands.

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Participation in sport

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act makes it unlawful to fail or refuse to select (in a sporting team) a person with HIV or hepatitis B or C, or to exclude them from participating in a sporting activity.

People with these viruses are not required to disclose their health status to coaches, sporting teams or sporting organisations. They are entitled to keep the fact that they have HIV, hepatitis B or C confidential.

Protecting everyone involved in sport

Consult the infection control policies that have been developed and are in practice at your sporting organisations. Simple and inexpensive procedures can prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis B and C, including:

- Remember to cover all pre-existing wounds before commencing a game.
- Infection control precautions include wearing protective gloves when giving first aid to bleeding players.
- Eyes splashed with blood – rinse the area gently but thoroughly, with the eyes open, with water or normal saline rinsing away from the nose.
- If blood gets in the mouth – spit it out and rinse the mouth with water several times.
- Standard practice is to stop play if a player is bleeding and allow them to return to play only after bleeding is controlled and the wound is properly covered.
- All wounds should be bandaged, and all playing surfaces and clothes exposed to blood should be properly cleaned or changed before play recommences.
- It is advisable to have your own drink bottle and towel, mouth guard and other personal items, including razors, to reduce the possibility of minute blood-to-blood transmission. If there is concern about potential infection, contact a doctor or health information line for further advice.

If a player is injured while playing sport:

- Stop the blood.
- Dress the wound.
- Clean up the blood.

All players, coaches, trainers, sporting officials and first aid officers should be aware of these infection control guidelines and treat every injury associated with blood as a potential source of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

It is important to practise safe sex when off the field by using condoms and water-based lubricant to protect yourself from HIV, hepatitis B and other sexually transmissible infections.

People who inject steroids or other performance enhancing drugs are at risk of HIV and both hepatitis B and C, if they share needles, syringes or any injecting equipment such as swabs or tourniquets. Injecting equipment should be used once only and never shared.

Immunisation is available against hepatitis B

You can be immunised against hepatitis B, but not against HIV or hepatitis C. Those responsible for managing on-field injuries and players involved in contact sports are strongly advised to be immunised against hepatitis B. Infection control procedures should be used even if you are immunised.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Australian Sports Medicine Federation, Victorian branch Tel. (03) 9674 8777
- Melbourne Sexual Health Centre Tel. (03) 9341 6200 or 1800 032 017 or TTY (for the hearing impaired) (03) 9347 8619
- PEP Information Line Tel. 1800 889 887

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Things to remember

- People infected with blood-borne viruses (BBVs) such as HIV or hepatitis B or C cannot be banned from playing sport.
- It is very unlikely that players will catch HIV or hepatitis B or C from an infected player.
- Follow infection control guidelines, implement the 'blood rule' policy, and wear gloves when helping bleeding players.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

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