



BLOOD POLICY

INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN SPORT

Microscopic organisms, live in, on and around us all the time - viruses, bacteria, fungi and tiny parasites. When they (a) exist in sufficient quantities, (b) are able to spread from someone or something (like food or animals) and (c) enter your body, they can cause disease. Some may be transmitted during play, some through social activities after the game. The way they are passed on from person to person varies and some are more serious than others, particularly if left untreated.

Of particular concern are the serious blood-borne viruses - HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C - which have the potential to be spread whenever there is blood present.

Transmission

People can be exposed to infection through participation in sport in a variety of ways:

- Through blood to blood contact via broken skin and open wounds. Of most concern are the blood-borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis C.
- Through contact between a person's broken skin, mouth, eyes and other mucous membranes with another person's infected body fluid (blood, saliva, semen and vaginal fluids). A number of serious infections are possible such as hepatitis B, meningococcal disease and many of the sexually transmissible infections.
- Through exposure of the skin to another person's infected skin or body fluids. This may be via direct body to body contact or indirectly through the use of shared equipment (eg wrestling mats), clothing (eg jumpers, socks) and other surfaces that remain moist for a period of time (shower floors, rub down benches). These usually involve fungal skin infections such as tinea, viral infections such as warts, or parasites such as scabies.
- Through ingestion of contaminated food and drinks. If people handling food don't wash their hands properly, hepatitis A or a number of other infectious diseases, such as those which cause gastroenteritis, can be passed on.
- By breathing in airborne droplets of saliva or sputum when an infectious person coughs, sneezes or spits. The common cold and the flu are easily passed on from person to person in this way.

Risk

The risk of being infected with a blood-borne virus through participation in sport is very low, however infection is possible. The risk can be minimised even further by following Blood Rules. If you have concerns about your risk of having been infected with a bloodborne virus, we recommend you consult your doctor or visit your local community health service.

Discrimination

State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of their disability or impairment in many areas of public life, including sport and club membership. As well as physical, sensory, intellectual and psychiatric impairment, disability is also defined as the presence in the body of an organism (such as HIV or one of the hepatitises) which may cause a disease.

While divulging HIV or hepatitis status is not required under law, there may be circumstances when a player might consider telling a coach or sports trainer about their condition. People are legally entitled to have this information remain confidential and other people are not entitled to access such information without the consent of the person in question.

While the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 is applied consistently across Australia, specific provisions related to disability discrimination in sport and clubs vary under each state and territory's equal opportunity laws.

STOP THE SPREAD OF INFECTION IN SPORT & PLAY... BE BLOOD AWARE

Get immunised against hepatitis A & B

Immunisation is an effective and inexpensive means of significantly reducing your risk of influenza, hepatitis A and hepatitis B (strongly recommended for contact sports).

Put Blood Rules into action

- stop the blood
- dress the wound
- clean up the blood

All sports, at both professional and amateur levels, should implement blood rules:

- A player who is bleeding or has blood on their clothing must immediately leave the playing field or court and seek medical attention.
- The bleeding must be stopped, the wound dressed and blood on the player's body or cleaned off before they return to the game.
- Play must cease until all blood on the ground or equipment is cleaned up.

Use gloves when handling blood or anything with blood on it

You should treat all blood and body fluids as though they are potentially infectious.

When spills of blood or other body fluids happen, as far as is possible:

- avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids;
- cover any cuts on your hands/body with an appropriate dressing; and
- wear latex gloves.

Keep clean, use your own stuff

Don't share clothing, razors, towels, face washers, nail clippers, drink bottles, mouth guards, medication inhalers or any other personal equipment which may have blood, saliva or other body fluids present. These fluids can be present in very minute quantities and not visible to the human eye, but still harbour enough germs to spread infection from one person to another.

Use condoms every time you have sex

Condoms used with water based lubricant greatly reduce the chance of an infection being passed from one person to another during genital, anal or oral sex. A dam, or Lollye (a thin square of latex rubber which is held over the vaginal or anal area during oral sex), can be used if a person has cuts or sores in or around the mouth. If you have trouble buying one, a condom carefully cut down one side can be used instead.

If you inject, use a new needle & syringe every time

If you're injecting drugs, it's important that you do so in ways that reduce your risk of infection from blood-borne viruses. This means making sure that needles, syringes, swabs, tourniquets and other injecting equipment are used once only, and your hands and all injecting equipment are clean. Injecting equipment should never be shared.

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have been involved in an incident (through sporting or other contact) where you are concerned that you may have become infected with a blood-borne virus or any other serious infection it is important to seek immediate medical advice, with your own doctor, local community health service or hospital. Below is a list of other organisations and sources of further information to contact if you want to know more about issues raised in this booklet.

GENERAL

Lifeline (for anyone about any issue)	13 1114
Sports Medicine Australia http://sma.org.au/	02 6247 5115

HIV/AIDS

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations www.afao.org.au	02 9557 9399
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine http://www.ashm.org.au/	02 8204 0700
National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS www.napwa.org.au	1800 259 666
Multicultural HIV/AIDS Education and Support Service	1800 108 098

HEPC

Australian Hepatitis Council www.hepatitisaustralia.com	1800 437 222
AIDS Hepatitis and Sexual Health Line Inc. www.aidshep.org.au	03 9347 6133

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION & HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission www.hreoc.gov.au	02 9284 9600
NSW Anti-Discrimination Board www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb	02 9268 5555
QLD Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland www.adcq.qld.gov.au	1300 130 670
VIC Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/	1300 292 153
NT Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission http://www.adc.nt.gov.au/	1800 813 846
SA South Australia Equal Opportunity Commission www.eoc.sa.gov.au/public	1800 188 163
WA Western Australia Equal Opportunity Commission www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au	1800 198 149

SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS

ACT Canberra Sexual Health Centre	02 6244 2184
NSW Sydney Sexual Health Centre	02 9382 7440

NT Clinic 34	08 8999 2678
QLD Sexual Health Clinic	07 3227 7091
SA Clinic 275	08 8222 5075
TAS Sexual Health Branch	03 6336 2216
VIC Melbourne Sexual Health Centre	03 9341 6200
WA Royal Perth Communicable Diseases	08 9244 2178

INTRAVENOUS DRUG USE

(Peer based drug user organisations)

Australian IV League www.aivl.org.au	02 6281 7853
ACT Capital Injectors Network	02 6281 7851/2
NSW Users and AIDS Association	02 8354 7300
NT Northern Territory AIDS Council or	08 8944 7777
QLD Intravenous AIDS Association	07 3252 5390
SA SAVIVE	08 8334 1696
TAS Tasmanian Users Health & Support League	03 6224 0416
VIC VIVAIDS	03 9419 3633
WA Substance Users Association	08 9321 2877

This pamphlet is part of an Blood Rules, OK educational resource kit.

Other resources which form part of the kit are:

- Blood Rules, OK. a 25-minute video produced by the ABC. The video is designed to show to groups of sports participants.
- Blood Rules, OK. Protect yourself in sport and play.... be Blood Aware! Booklet which accompanies the video and which explores issues in more depth. Contains fact sheets and references to useful web-sites.
- Blood Rules, OK. Protect yourself in sport and play.... be Blood Aware! Poster for display in club rooms.

Copies of the educational resources kit can be obtained by contacting:

Sports Medicine Australia	02 6247 5115
Australian Sports Trainers Association	03 9727 1048
Sport Education	02 6214 1550
Australian Society of Sports Administrators	03 9593 2811

National and State Sporting Organisations. Please refer to the relevant organisation for your sport. See the Australian Sports Directory: <http://www.ausport.gov.au>

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