Importance of Washing Hands in sports

Germs are everywhere: they are on your sports equipment, on your desk, and especially in bathrooms and locker rooms. The most common way people catch colds is by rubbing their nose, their eyes, or their mouths without washing their hands. In addition, some pretty serious diseases like hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea can easily be prevented if people make a habit of washing their hands. Kids can spread infectious diseases to adults and often the adults get even sicker than the kids do.

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands. By frequently washing your hands you wash away germs that you have picked up from other people, from contaminated surfaces or from animals.

Children easily forget about washing their hands if you are not there to remind them. Continually stress the importance of not spreading germs to friends and family, and set a good example yourself!

When should you wash your hands? As often as possible!

Especially Before:
- Preparing food
- Eating
- Touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Especially After:
- Using the toilet
- Being outdoors (practice, game, recess, afterschool, weekends)
- Playing with the pets
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Blowing your nose

Both adults and children should wash hands often!

1. Wet hands and forearms with running water.
2. Add soap, and rub hands together to make a soapy lather. Wash well for 15-20 seconds (sing A-B-Cs); wash the fronts and backs of your hands and wrists, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
3. Rinse the forearms and hands thoroughly. Avoid touching the side of the sink with clean hands and arms.
4. Dry hands with paper towels. Use the paper towel to turn off the water. Use a paper towel to open the door after washing hands in public restrooms.
More **Hand Hygiene** Tips

According to the Centers for Disease Control, proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Unclean hands can transfer germs from hands to food, from an infected person to another person, or from one food to another food.

Depending on your situation, there are several options for getting hands clean:

- Wet hands, add soap, rub vigorously for 20 seconds, rinse with clean warm water, and dry with a clean, disposable paper towel.

- If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based (waterless) hand rub or gel. Apply the product to the palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers, until hands are dry.

- Hand sanitizing wipes can help clean dirty hands. Depending on how dirty hands are, more than one wipe may be needed. Hand wipes can be used in combination with an alcohol or chlorine-based rub.

Most alcohol rubs contain ethyl alcohol to kill the germs on your hands. The alcohol breaks down the germs' cell walls causing them to die and fall off your skin.