



Surrey Secondary Schools' Athletic Association
c/o 7532-134A Street
Surrey, B.C. V3W 7J1

October 28, 2009

Influenza Prevention Tips for Athletic Teams

In response to the recent threat of influenza, including H1N1, the Surrey Secondary Schools Athletic Association urges coaches to communicate to their student-athletes to follow the recommendations from the Fraser Health Authority:

- If experiencing any flu-like symptoms, stay home and limit contact with others. This may be difficult for your student-athletes as they will want to participate, however, it is in the best interest of your team to prevent further outbreaks.
- Generally avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, but especially when in the sport environment, as these are the major entry points for germs. You can reduce the chance of passing an infection on to yourself.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing, is the best way to prevent catching the flu. Carry alcohol-based hand gels in your first-aid kits to administer during practices and games. The virus can survive on a variety of surfaces from 2 to 8 hours so always wash hands after handling sports equipment and common touch surfaces such as doorknobs and weight room equipment.
- Avoid sharing water bottles, ideally having labeled individual bottles. Wash bottles after each use with warm water and soap. Sport drink bottles should be avoided as direct lip contact is possible when drinking.
- Avoid sharing pre/post-game snacks and beverages, cosmetics, cell phones, clothing, etc. It is highly recommended to remove towels from benches.
- Encourage proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing by covering your nose and mouth with a tissue and then properly disposing of the tissue in the trash. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve as the virus can not survive as long on fabric. During a game situation this may not be possible, so sanitize your hands as soon as possible.

The issue of handshaking prior to a game by captains and post game by players as a demonstration of sportsmanship has been a longstanding tradition. Given the viral nature of influenza and the close proximity of engagement in many sporting activities, eliminating handshaking becomes a moot point.

However, individual players and teams should have the option to decide whether they would like to demonstrate their sportsmanship in an alternate fashion, eg. Fist bump, elbow tap, nod of head, thumbs up, etc. If another option is pursued, please inform opposing coaches as soon as possible.

As an athletic association and as coaches we do our part to address the current pandemic and teams are diligent in good health practices. Take this opportunity of heightened awareness to reinforce the common practices of good hygiene and cleanliness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Young".

Glenn Young
Physical Education and Athletics Coordinator
Surrey School District #36 (Surrey)