

## Preventing Skin Infections

Keeping wrestlers healthy by avoiding skin infections is a concern of every wrestler, wrestling parent and coach. While skin infections such as ringworm (*Tinea fungus*), impetigo (bacterial infection), herpes (virus) and pink eye (conjunctivitis) are not uncommon in contact sports, wrestlers need to take specific precautions to avoid infection.

**1. Apply a skin protectant.** Your team must follow the directions on how the skin protectant should be applied. Kennedy Industries recommends the application of KS Skin Protection before every practice and every match to all external skin surfaces from the waist up and the singlet down, including the stomach and back areas covered by clothing.

**2. Showers should be taken immediately following all practices and competitions.** The quicker the wrestler gets to the shower, the better. A great number of today's athletes prefer to shower at home. If this is the case, the shower must be the first thing the athlete does when he gets home. The use of a shower mesh or wash cloth in conjunction with an antibacterial cleanser is strongly recommended. Using a shower mesh removes dirt and grime from the body better than just using the hands and the mess dries quickly to prevent the growth of bacteria and fungi than can build up in a damp wash cloth.

**3. Do not re-use unwashed towels. Do not share towels.** Many skin infections are contagious. Re-using towels or the sharing of towels with others may lead to greater opportunity for contamination.

**4. Do not practice in clothing that has not been washed and dried.** This includes pads and sleeves. If an athlete re-uses clothing or towels from a previous practice, that clothing could be contaminated with harmful bacteria and fungi that could have multiplied, especially if they've been left in a dark, damp locker or gym bag. Clothes and towels taken home for laundering should be placed in disposable, plastic bags, never directly into a gym bag. This helps prevent germs from being transferred to the inside of the gym bag.