

MINIMIZING FLU AND OTHER HEALTH RISK ISSUES IN THE ATHLETIC ENVIRONMENT

Lake Local School District Athletic Department

Crowded conditions and personal proximity can make gyms and locker rooms potential breeding grounds for flu viruses. Students, coaches and parents can minimize many of these risks by following an appropriate plan for good hygiene and prevention. Here are health tips we recommend to all of those associated with our Blue Streak athletic programs.

- 1) Focus upon hygiene: Encourage showering after every practice. Good personal hygiene can prevent viruses such as the flu.
- 2) Clean practice equipment: We've told parents, "If your laundry room doesn't smell every night, you need to ask questions!" When you are dealing with active students and athletes, they need to be kept on task for cleaning equipment (uniforms, practice gear, etc.) on a *very* regular basis.
- 3) Wash your hands: Hand sanitizers should be available throughout all venues; lockers, gyms, weight rooms and training rooms. Students and coaches should wash hands frequently with soap and water and use alcohol-based hand cleaners especially after coughing or sneezing. Additionally, "Cover and Cough" should be the battle-cry for all.
- 4) Facilities management: Our LLSD maintenance staff cleans all facilities daily and attempts to disinfect all areas that may be exposed to germs and viruses. Likewise, students should keep areas like their personal areas and lockers clean on a weekly, if not *daily*, basis.
- 5) Insure adequate rest/sleep: During the season, students are at maximum physical stress levels. Between attending classes, studying, practices and contests, there sometimes is a tendency to give "rest" the appropriate amount of time. During these high-stress periods for the body, parents should monitor their child's sleep and rest time-frames to insure adequate recovery periods. Seven to eight (7-8) hours of sleep for teenagers is strongly recommended by national experts.