



### Diseases Fact Sheet - Herpes Gladiatorum

#### South Dakota Department of Health

**Office of Disease Prevention Services - 605-773-3737 -(1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only)**

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

#### What is it?

Herpes gladiatorum is a skin infection caused by herpes simplex virus, which causes a rash usually on the head, face, neck, shoulders, arms or trunk. Sometimes the eyes may become infected.

Herpes gladiatorum occurs more frequently in wrestlers than in the general population due to the close physical contact of the sport.

#### How does it occur?

An infected person can pass the virus to an uninfected person by skin-to-skin contact. The rash starts 3-8 days after contact with an infected person.

#### Symptoms

Usually there is a rash or cluster of small blisters that may be painful or painless. A fever and swollen lymph glands may also be present. The rash generally lasts up to 10 to 14 days. There may be a later reoccurrence of the rash.

#### Diagnosis

See a physician. After examining the skin the physician may do a viral culture for herpes virus. Other skin infections may also cause rashes, blisters or lesions.

#### Treatment

A physician may prescribe a medicine to speed recovery.

#### Prevention

Watch for any rashes or blisters. Do not wrestle if you or your opponent has a skin infection or rash. Shower immediately after wrestling practice or competition. Wrestling mats and headgear should be routinely cleaned and disinfected. Don't share towels.