

Sports dermatology book aides athletes

By Jathan Fink
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Participating in sports carries some amount of health risk, but broken bones and pulled muscles are not the only problems that plague athletes.

"Athletes also get all of the skin conditions that non-athletes do, as well as some more specific to sports," said W. Kenneth Stephens, the assistant medical director for University Health Services at the University of

Cincinnati.

According to Stephens, these skin conditions include infections, skin reactions and skin injuries.

These types of conditions are discussed in *Sports Dermatology*, a new book by UC dermatologist Dr. Brian Adams. The book was published this summer by Springer Science + Business Media, LLC.

Although the book was originally written with medical pro-

fessionals in mind, Adams said he hopes it will also be useful to anyone who considers sports and exercise a part of their daily life.

"The book's focus wasn't on dermatologists, but on the athletes themselves as well as anyone who suffers from sports-

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Courtesy of University of Cincinnati

Dr. Brian Adams talks with a student athlete.

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related skin problems, including those who work out in a gym or swim on a regular basis," Adams said.

As the primary care team physician for all varsity athletes at UC, Stephens said he had "referred several athletes with difficult dermatological problems to Dr. Adams with excellent results."

Adams said while athletes can get the same skin problems that non-athletes do, they acquire these issues at a more intense level.

"Wrestlers are highly prone to skin problems because of the constant skin to skin contact required of the sport," Adams said.

According to Adams, gymnasiums are breeding grounds for the microbes that cause these problems. Therefore athletes can acquire infections from the bacterial particles that linger on objects

like weight benches or shower floors. Some dermatological problems even arise from sharing yoga mats.

"Never let your feet touch the floor," Adams said. "You should always wear sandals or sneakers in the gym and locker room, because these places act like a giant petri dish for bacteria. Not wearing this basic protective gear is opening yourself to fungus like athlete's foot and other issues."

Bill Walker, the assistant athletic director of Sports Medicine for the Athletics Department has been at UC for 30 years. He said he has worked with Adams since he started his practice at the university.

"Any type of skin issue is referred to Dr. Adams," Walker said. "With over 500 student athletes, we have seen a large variety of skin issues."

According to Walker, his student athletes use Adams' sports dermatology clinic extensively.

"Dr. Adams' book is on my personal list to purchase and on

the list to purchase as a reference in the Athletic Training Department facility," Walker said.

The book spans a wide range of topics, from atypical mycobacterial skin infections to chemical deposition and anabolic steroids, and is divided into five sections: skin infections, aberrant growths, inflammatory reactions, traumatic conditions and conditions induced by the environment.

Parasites, nodules, skin cancer, allergies and irritants, friction and pressure injuries are also covered, as well as tips on how to avoid dermatological hazards while participating in certain sports and athletic activities.

Adams and Walker are in the process of expanding on a survey concerning sunscreen product usage.

Adams serves as the chief of dermatology at the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center, a clinical instructor in UC's athletic training program, and is an associate professor of dermatology at the UC College of Medicine.