

# NOTES FROM THE NURSE

## CLEANING SPORTS EQUIPMENT

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that “equipment, such as helmets and protective gear, should be cleaned according to the equipment manufacturers’ instructions to make sure the cleaner will not harm the item.” They also recommend daily cleaning of all items with which your skin comes in contact.

Below are generic cleaning guidelines for sports equipment.

### **Daily/Weekly**

For all plastic protective gear, you can wash them daily with soap and water. Use a small brush and scrub with soapy water until all the dirt and stains are gone. You can also try vinegar mixed with water or lemon juice. If there is elastic or cloth, brush off any dry dirt first. Then soak them in soapy water for 15 to 20 minutes. Make sure you rinse them well and wring them out using a towel to remove excess moisture.

If you aren’t able to wash them daily, spray your shin guards with spray disinfectant after each use to prevent fungus and bacteria from growing. Bacteria can cause odors, so preventing its growth or attacking it early is essential to extending the useful life of the equipment.

### **Monthly**

Wash your protective gear in your washing machine at least once a month. If there is plastic on the outside, put the item in a pillowcase that zips up for washing. Use both detergent and softener to help eliminate any odors.

### **Drying**

Hang your item outside to dry. The sun and fresh air will also serve as deodorizers, eliminating any remaining odors and helping them to dry completely. Drying in a dryer can cause breakdown of the elastic part of the gear.