



# **Musical Mortals to Musical Zombies: How to Avoid the Band Cootie Apocalypse**

**CLINICIANS:**

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## **Bottom Line:**

- *The liquid from water keys does not pose a hazard to musicians with normal immune systems.*
- The Centers for Disease Control and the Texas Department of State Health Services have no record of disease outbreaks in bands.

## ***Other Thoughts***

- Bands are highly inclusive and diversified.
  - Students with mental, physical or emotional disabilities can participate in band.
  - Most band students are healthy.
- Bands are vulnerable during travel when/if they share food and close spaces.
- There may be special situations in which players would require attention to prevent the spread of infections.
- Some band directors believe their students have a higher incidence of upper respiratory infections.
- A contagious disease outbreak could reduce a band to ineffectiveness.
- Band directors should be alert for unusual patterns of disease in band members.
- Good health practices should be a regular part of musical instruction.

## **Good Health Practices**

### ***Students should:***

- wash their hands often.
- rinse their mouths before each rehearsal.
- not share mouthpieces.

### ***Directors should:***

- always have a bottle of mouthpiece sanitizer within reach.
- always have a bottle of hand sanitizer within reach.
- encourage students to clean their instruments often.
- assign students to clean their instruments with soap and water every 4 to 6 weeks to eliminate any substrate for bacterial growth.
- leave cases open as often as possible to allow the instrument to dry completely.
- have school-owned instruments cleaned professionally before they are reissued.