



Sports Safety Tip Sheet for Parents and Coaches



Learn more than just how to win. Learn how to keep young athletes injury free so they can stay in the game.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: Every child should receive a pre-participation physical evaluation (PPE) every year. This exam can find underlying conditions the young athlete may have, preventing a potential medical emergency.

Action: Parents, ask your child's doctor to perform a full PPE. A copy of the exam can be obtained by going to www.safekids.org/sports.

BEFORE PRACTICE, PLAY OR COMPETITION:

Warming up and stretching before play can help prevent sports-related injuries (such as muscle tears or sprains) by stretching and releasing any muscle tension.

Action: Make time before practices and games to warm up. This could mean a light run, jogging in place, jumping jacks, or anything that brings the athletes' heart rate up gradually. Then stretch all the major muscle groups, holding each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds.

CONCUSSIONS: Bumps, blows or hits to the head need to be taken seriously.

Action: Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion. If you suspect an athlete has sustained a concussion, immediately remove the child from play. Also, be aware of any concussion policies for your state and/or sports league.

HYDRATION: Hydrating before, during and after practices and games is essential.



Action: Make sure the athletes drink water 30 minutes before the activity begins and every 15-20 minutes during activity. Don't wait for kids to tell you they are thirsty. Establish regular water breaks during practices and games.

REST: Rest is essential in reducing the risk of injuries.

Action: In addition to making sure kids get a rest break during practices and games, it's recommended that they get two days off from sports activities every week and at least ten weeks of rest from any one sport each year.

GEAR: Wearing the appropriate and properly fitted sports gear during practices and games can help avoid minor and serious injuries.

Action: Make sure athletes have the right equipment—this may include helmets, shin guards, mouth guards, ankle braces, shoes with rubber cleats and sunscreen.

COACHES: It's important to learn how to prevent injuries and handle medical emergencies.

Action: Establish guidelines that athletes, parents and coaches will follow, such as taking hydration breaks, learning ways to prevent, recognize and respond to concussions and preventing overuse injuries. It's also a good idea to become trained and certified in first aid and emergency response.



PARENTS: Learn ways to help your child have fun, stay injury free and healthy while playing sports.

Action: Make sure your child receives a PPE from his or her doctor, encourage hydration before and after the game, and learn about the signs and symptoms of a concussion and an overuse injury. Becoming certified in first aid and CPR is another good idea.

ATTEND A SPORTS SAFETY CLINIC: Safe Kids offers free Youth Sports Safety Clinics, which teach coaches and parents ways to keep young athletes healthy and injury free throughout their sports career.

Action: Go to www.safekids.org/sports to learn more about youth sports safety tips and to find a Safe Kids sports safety clinic in your area.