



Sports Injuries



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 2.6 million children ages 19 and under were seen in emergency departments between 2001 and 2009 for injuries related to sports and recreation. This includes sports such as football, basketball, baseball, and soccer, and activities such as skateboarding, bicycling, and trampolining. Many of those injuries included concussions and traumatic brain injuries.

The National Institutes of Health lists the following as the most common sports-related injuries in children:

- Sprains and strains (to ligaments, muscles or tendons)
- Growth plate injuries to the long bones in the body (including stress fractures and tendinitis)
- Repetitive motion injuries
- Heat-related illnesses (including dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke)

Prevention

- If your child is participating in an organized sport, ensure that the coach is trained in first aid and CPR and has a plan for responding to emergencies.
- Make sure the protective equipment your child is using (like helmets, face masks, and pads) is in good condition and that he/she uses it correctly.
- Proper clothing for the sport and weather conditions is essential.
- Teach your child the importance of warm-ups and cool-downs before and after sports participation.
- Make sure the recreational equipment (like bicycles, trampolines, and skateboards) is in good condition and remove it from use if it is not.
- Check the playing surface and ensure it is properly maintained.
- Provide water and have it available before, during, and after play.
- If it is hot outside, schedule regular breaks and substitute players frequently.

Concussions

On July 1, 2012, the Concussion Management and Awareness Act of NYS took effect and requires schools to protect students from head injuries, one of the most important ways to prevent a concussion. To minimize the risk, schools must:

- Educate parents, athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, physical education teachers, and school nurses on concussion;
- Remove observed or suspected concussed students from play based on signs and symptoms;
- Withhold further participation until evaluated by, and received written and signed authorization to return to activities from a licensed physician; and

- Obtain physician clearance, and when the athlete has been symptom-free off pain killing medicines for a minimum of 24 hours and allow them to begin a monitored progressive six phase return to play.

The activities that present a higher than average risk for concussions include, but are not limited to: interscholastic athletics, extramural activities, physical education classes, and recess.

New York has adopted a national sports-related concussion prevention campaign called, “When in Doubt... Take Them Out!”

About those trampolines...

The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that trampolines in the home setting are too dangerous. Although this is a very popular activity among both children and adolescents, too many people have been seriously injured due to multiple children jumping at once, falls from the trampoline, and impact with the trampoline frame and springs. Injuries include:

- Ankle sprains
- Broken bones from falling
- Head injuries from falling
- Neck injuries from failed somersaults or flips

Even with adult supervision these injuries continue to occur. It is not worth the risk.

Treatment for Sports Injuries

Sports and recreational injuries vary and so will the treatment. For sprains and strains, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases recommends following the “RICE” method:

Rest: Reduce or stop using the injured area for at least 48 hours. If you have a leg injury, you may need to stay off of it completely.

Ice: Put an ice pack on the injured area for 20 minutes at a time, four to eight times per day. Use a cold pack, ice bag, or a plastic bag filled with crushed ice that has been wrapped in a towel.

Compression: Ask your child’s doctor about elastics wraps, air casts, special boots, or splints that can be used to compress an injured ankle, knee, or wrist to reduce swelling.

Elevation: Keep the injured area elevated above the level of the heart to help decrease swelling. Use a pillow to help elevate an injured limb.

The organization *STOP Sports Injuries* has sport- and issue-specific injury and treatment information available to browse and download.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Corcoran, Trauma Injury Prevention and Outreach Coordinator, at (914) 493-5846.