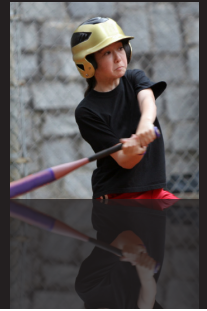


Safe Sports Tips



As a youth coach or parent, learn more than just the rules and skills required to win — learn how to keep your 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. These exams help with the prevention and treatment of any underlying conditions the young athlete may have.

Action: Parents, talk to your child's doctor and ask them to perform the full Pre-Participation Evaluation. You can obtain a copy of the exam by going to www.safekids.org/sports.

BEFORE PRACTICE, PLAY OR COMPETITION: Warming up and stretching before play is essential. This helps athletes avoid injuries such as muscle tears or sprains by stretching and releasing any muscle tension.

Action: Make sure there is time set aside before every practice and game to warm up. This could mean a light run, jogging in place or anything that brings the athletes' heart rate up gradually. Instruct the kids on how to stretch muscles and holding for 10-15 seconds.



Hydration: Hydrating well before, during and after practices and games is a must.

Action: Make sure your athlete drinks about 12 ounces of fluid 30 minutes before activity begins; at least 10 gulps every 20 minutes of play and every 20 minutes during the first hour after the activity to make up for fluid loss.

GEAR: Wearing the appropriate and properly fitted sports equipment can help avoid minor and serious injuries such as concussions.

Action: Make sure your athlete has the proper equipment to perform at his or her best—this may include helmets, shin guards, ankle braces, shoes with rubber cleats, and sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.



QUALIFIED COACHING: Become properly trained and learn the sport-specific techniques that can prevent injury or illness that can occur.

Action: Establish safety guidelines that athletes, parents and coaches will follow such as PPE requirements, hydration breaks and ways to prevent or detect concussions and overuse injuries.

SUPPORTIVE PARENTING: Learn how you can help your child stay injury-free and optimally healthy.

Action: Make sure the child receives a PPE by their doctor, encourage hydration before and after the game and learning about the signs and symptoms of a concussion are just a few critical action steps you can take.



ATTEND A SPORTS SAFETY CLINIC: These clinics such as Safe Kids and National Athletic Trainer's Association's Sports Clinics are tailored to give coaches and parents the best ways to keep young athletes optimally healthy and injury-free. Also, become trained and certified in First Aid and emergency response.

Action: Learn more about youth sports safety, or how to find a sports safety clinic in your area, by going to www.safekids.org/sports.