

Injury Prevention/Injury Management

Each year more than 775,000 children under age 15 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for sports injuries. In fact sports injuries are the number one reason for emergency department visits among children. Many of these injuries can be prevented if parents get involved and make sure their children wear protective gear, follow the rules of play and are physically and emotionally prepared to play the sport. Coaches play a major role in injury prevention when they plan and run appropriate practice and game sessions.

Injury Prevention

The six dictates to injury prevention are

1. Proper warm-up and cool down
2. Sufficient physical conditioning
3. Correct soccer techniques
4. Age and skill appropriate activity
5. Knowledge and application of the Laws of the Game
6. Sufficient rest and fluids

COACHES – YOU PREVENT, NOT TREAT INJURIES.

FOUR STEPS TO PROPER WARM-UP

1. Light exercise to increase heat throughout the body
2. Static stretching to prepare the body for exercise
3. Dynamic stretching (also referred to as ballistic stretching) to prepare the body for the demands of rigorous activity
4. Sport-specific exercises

TWO STEPS TO PROPER COOL DOWN

Your cool down should start with light aerobic activity, such as a slow jog or light game where every player is moving.

Stretch for 10 minutes after the light aerobic activity. First perform some light dynamic stretches until the heart rate drops to normal, and then perform static stretches.

SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Players, especially those in U-12 and older, will avoid many late game injuries by proper conditioning.

Proper conditioning is built into practice.

CORRECT SOCCER TECHNIQUES

The techniques used in the game have evolved because they are effective and reduce the risk of injury.

A coach needs to learn the proper techniques and teach them to the players to prevent injuries caused by bad technique.

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AGE AND SKILL APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

It is imperative that the coach knows and uses age appropriate skills and activities in the pursuit of injury prevention. AYSO has developed excellent age and discipline specific coach clinics, which provide the coach with the knowledge needed to effectively teach proper techniques at the appropriate ages.

KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION OF THE LAWS OF THE GAME

Coaches must have a good knowledge of the Laws of the Game and apply them in practices and games if they hope to prevent injuries.

The Laws are designed to allow for continuous play with little risk of injury. The “dangerous play” law deals directly with injury reduction.

SUFFICIENT REST AND FLUIDS

Sufficient rest and fluids are critical to injury prevention. Good coaching and safety requires coaches to be reasonable in their practice procedures. Recovery time and fluids must be allowed during practices and games.

A large amount of water will not hurt your players. Teach your players to consistently take in fluid. Tell them, “DON’T WAIT TO FEEL THIRSTY BEFORE YOU DRINK!”

INJURY MANAGEMENT

There are two basic functions that a coach will have to fill when an injury does occur:

1. Recognizing types of injuries
2. Appropriate injury management

ALWAYS!!! Put the child’s welfare ahead of the team’s needs.

It is highly recommended that every coach and volunteer attend a basic first aid course, be proficient in CPR and learn to perform the Heimlich maneuver.

An acronym that every coach should have in his or her vocabulary is **RICE**:

Rest
Ice
Compression
Elevation