

SSA Player Injury Prevention and Care Guide

Prevention of Injuries

The first line of defense in the treatment of athletic injuries is to prevent them. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this:

1. Adherence to club weather policies as they relate to temperatures (both hot and cold) and their impact on practice and game duration and intensity.
2. Awareness of goal and field safety with respect to goal frames being secure and in good shape. Usage of sandbags or anchors to weigh goals down and avoidance of goals or areas of the field that may present a danger.
3. Proper use of equipment (shin guards, no jewelry, uniforms designed for climate), proper fitting shoes, proper type of shoe for surface.
4. Ample water supply and sufficient number of rests and length of rests.
5. Full rehabilitation of an injury prior to return to play, determined by a physician if appropriate.
6. Coach should follow-up a player's injury with a conversation with the player's parent.
7. Each team is recommended to have a First Aid Kit in its possession.

Care of Injured Athletes

The care of the injured athlete should begin the moment an injury occurs. Immediate care will reduce the severity of the injury and possibility of long-term disability. The coach, upon seeing an injured player on the field should use the Check/Call/Care course of action:

1. **Check** the individual for level of consciousness, breathing, pulse, and bleeding. If the individual is not responding to his/her name being called or to a tap on the shoulder and there is concern about his/her breathing, pulse, or signs of life-threatening bleeding, the coach should get a bystander to **call** 9-1-1 immediately, while the coach continues to provide **care**:
2. Make sure that the airway is clear
3. Determine if the player is conscious
4. Ask how the injury occurred
5. Ask the player where it hurts
6. If the player is unable to continue, he should be checked to determine the extent of the injury
7. After determining that the injury IS NOT life threatening, the nature of the injury can be further determined
8. Note the position of the injured part, looking for swelling and deformity by compare it with the opposite side

9. Treatment for Minor Injuries

It is recommended treating injuries such as sprains, strains, and contusions using R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation). R.I.C.E treatments, limited to 20 minutes, are safe for any type of sports injury without professional advice. R.I.C.E helps in three ways:

1. Applying ice cools the injured area causing the blood vessels to contract, closing circulation to the injured area
2. Applying pressure with an elastic bandage inhibits the accumulation of blood and fluids in the area, thereby minimizing pain and swelling
3. Elevating the injured area decreases fluid accumulation to the injured area, puts the area to rest, and helps to reduce painful muscle spasms.

Familiar Terms You Should Know

Sprain – ligaments are bands of tissue that attach bone to bone and stabilize joints. A sprain is an injury to one or more ligaments.

Strain – a tearing injury to a muscle or a tendon (tendons attach muscle to bone). Athlete may hear the muscle tearing, muscle fatigue, and spasm before loss of muscle function.

Contusion – a crushing injury to a muscle or tendon caused by an outside force, which causes hemorrhaging to surrounding tissue.

Abrasion – a loss of surface area of skin caused by sliding. Care – the area should be cleaned with an antiseptic to prevent infection. An antibiotic ointment should be applied to keep the wound moist and destroy any bacteria present.

Heat Injuries:

Heat Cramps – an involuntary contraction of muscle or a muscle group that is repetitive and rapid in nature. Care – rest, drink water, and stretching.

Heat Exhaustion – surface temperature approximately normal, skin pale and clammy, profuse perspiration, tired, and weak, headache, perhaps cramps, nausea, dizziness, possible vomiting and possible fainting (the player will most likely regain consciousness as the head is lowered).

Care – move to a cool area (air-conditioned if possible), have the player lie down with feet elevated, remove restrictive apparel as appropriate, cool with wet cloths or by fanning. If player is alert – water may be given (1/2 glass per 15 minutes). If player vomits – take to hospital immediately and always refer to physician for further diagnosis, and treatment prior to return to activity.

Heat Stroke – body temperature is high, skin is hot, red and dry, sweating mechanism is blocked, pulse is rapid and strong, player may lose consciousness. Care – seek immediate medical care (Call 911), while waiting; treat as above for heat exhaustion keeping in mind that if you reduce the body temperature too rapidly it can cause internal bleeding.

General Principles When Handling an Injured Player

1. Avoid panic, use common sense, and seek professional help. **Many of our Recreational, Academy, and Select Directors are first-aid certified and are usually present at the fields if additional help is needed**
2. Check for breathing, bleeding, consciousness, deformity, discoloration and shock
3. Dependent upon the nature of the injury, avoid moving the player
4. Inspire confidence and reassure the player, determine how the injury occurred
5. Use certified athletic trainers when available, always err on the side of caution
6. It is recommended that if a player has had medical attention, he/she must have written permission from the doctor to return to activity

Concussion

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion:

Appears dazed or stunned
Is confused about assignment or position
Forgets an instruction
Is unsure of the score or opponent
Moves clumsily
Answers questions slowly
Loses consciousness (even briefly)
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms reported by Athlete:

Headache or "pressure" in head
Nausea or vomiting
Balance problems or dizziness
Double or blurry vision
Sensitivity to light
Sensitivity to noise
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Concentration or memory problems
Confusion
Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

- 1) Remove the athlete from play
- 2) Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a healthcare professional, experienced in evaluation for concussion. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself
- 3) Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion
- 4) Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom free and it's ok to return to play

For more information on concussion, including an information sheet and online quiz, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>