



Sports Injury Prevention

Most sports injuries are preventable. Some guidelines that may assist in injury prevention are:

Use of appropriate equipment

Appropriate equipment that is the correct size and carefully fitted for the child is essential for injury prevention. Safety gear that is appropriate to the specific sport should always be worn. This also needs to be the appropriate size and fit for the child. Helmets should also be worn when rollerblading or riding scooters and skateboards. Protective eyewear, like goggles should be worn for racquet sports. Protective equipment should be approved by an appropriate certifying organization or meet Australian Safety guidelines.

Athletic equipment should also be safety-oriented. For example, soccer goal posts should be stable and difficult to 'knock over'.

Playing surfaces should be well maintained

Check that playing fields are not full of holes and ruts, possibly causing the child to fall. Basketball courts and running tracks should not be concrete and any liquid spills must be wiped away immediately. Carpet surfaces should be void of holes and rips that can be tripped on and any rugs should be non-slip.

Supervision is paramount

Qualified adults should supervise any team sport or physical activity that the child participates in. Trainers must maintain their first aid qualifications and be wary of 'win at all costs' mentality of other trainers or parents.

Appropriate skill level of children

A child who can't swim shouldn't be sent to a pool for training. Correct preparation before exercise is mandatory. The child should be adequately warmed-up and training sessions should progress from easy to more challenging as skills develop. Proper preparation will help ensure that the child has fun and reduces the chances of an injury. In addition, the child should drink plenty of fluids and have adequate rest throughout.

Exercise should always stop if a child is in pain, feeling dizzy or faint, feels sick or very tired. It is best to avoid exercise, or only train very lightly, if the child is unwell, such as if the child has a cold or bronchitis.

Appropriate Warming Up / Cooling Down

Warm ups: stretches of the muscles that will be used during the exercise, such as muscles in the legs and back, plus some gentle aerobic exercise, such as slow jogging.

Warm downs: some more slow jogging, then again stretches of legs, back and shoulders which help to prevent muscle soreness after exercise.