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# 10 Injury Safety Tips For Parents

The best defense is a great offense – for parents, that offense is being proactive in setting up your child for safety success by following these procedures:

## 1. Let's get [α] physical

Obtain a physical exam for your child before he/she begins a season or league. This is the most effective way to screen for any preexisting conditions and identify any potential injury risks

## 2. Kick it into fullgear

Understand the proper equipment needed for your child's respective sport and make sure to acquire the right size with the appropriate fit. Continuously check/monitor the condition of the gear on a weekly basis throughout the course of the season and verify the equipment is worn correctly at all times.

## 3. Tread Lightly With Training

Monitor your child's training to ensure sure slow and steady increases in intensity. Your child's injury risk will rise if he/she puts too much strain on the body too quickly – a gradual progression will allow the muscles and cardiovascular system to increase their level of condition as training ramps up. A good rule of thumb is to abide by the "10 percent rule": Do not increase training activity, weight, mileage, or pace by more than 10 percent per week. This will give your child's body ample time to recover.

## 4. Rest, Recover, Repeat.

Educate your child on the importance of getting a full night's sleep. Encourage him/her to go to bed at a consistent time and to not stay up late. Preach the fact that proper rest and sleep will help replenish their energy to full strength and prepare them for the next competition.

## 5. Nurture Nutrition Habits

Supply your child with a well-balanced diet to fuel him/her with the vitamins and nutrients needed to compete at the highest possible level. If you think your child may need a dietary boost, talk to your medical provider about proper supplementation, and always consult your physician before taking any over-the-counter or prescriptive drugs.

## 6. Warm It Up!

Ensure your child is properly stretched and has gradually increased his/her heart rate before engaging in any practice or game. Warm ups should begin with light jogging and other dynamic exercises to bring the heart rate above resting levels. Then, static stretching should be performed to relieve muscle tension. Teach your child to stretch just beyond the point of resistance and hold steady for 10-12 seconds – do not "bounce" back and forth.

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## 10 injury tips, continued

### 7. Cool it down

Encourage your child to stretch immediately after a practice or game concludes to help avoid injuries and allow his/her heart rate to gradually return to a resting level.

### 8. Tackle the Temperature

Properly prepare for extreme weather conditions with the necessary attire and hydration habits to prevent heat exhaustion or heat strokes during extremely hot temperatures and frost bites or hypothermia during extremely cold conditions. Parents and coaches should pay close attention to make sure that all children are hydrated and appropriately dressed at all times.

### 9. Get Smart

Take the time to get informed about proper injury prevention strategies and actively incorporate these into your child's routine. Be sure the youth sports program or school has an action plan that includes information on how to teach athletes ways to lower their chances of getting a concussion and how to prevent other injuries.

### 10. Set the Tone

Communicate positive safety messages and serve as a model of safe behavior through your own actions.

