



FACTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD SPORTS INJURIES

Nearly three-quarters of U.S. households with school-age children have at least one child who plays organized sports. While the risk of physical injury is inherent in sports participation, children are especially susceptible to these injuries because they are still growing and gaining motor and cognitive skills.

- More than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year. The majority of these injuries are from falls, collisions, overexertion or being struck by an object, and they usually occur during unorganized or informal sports activities.
- Death among children during participation in sports activities is rare. Brain injury is the leading cause of sports-related death.
- Injuries associated with participation in sports and recreational activities account for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children.
- Sports injuries account for approximately 55 percent of nonfatal injuries at school.
- Most organized sports-related injuries (62 percent) occur during practices rather than games. Despite this fact, a third of parents often do not take the same safety precautions during their child's practices as they would for a game.
- Thirty percent of parents report that their child has been injured while playing a team sport; half of these say the child has been injured more than once. Nearly a quarter of these parents report the injury was serious.

Collision and contact sports are associated with higher rates of injury. However, injuries from individual sports tend to be more severe.

- *Baseball* has the highest fatality rate among all sports for children ages 5 to 14. Each year, three to four children die from injuries sustained while playing baseball. In 2003, nearly 108,300 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for baseball- or softball-related injuries.
- In 2003, more than 205,400 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *basketball*-related injuries.

- In 2003, nearly 185,700 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *football*-related injuries.
- In 2003, more than 75,000 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *soccer*-related injuries.
- In 2003, nearly 22,000 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *gymnastics*-related injuries.
- A recent survey found that among athletes ages 5 to 14, 15 percent of basketball players, 28 percent of football players, 22 percent of soccer players, 25 percent of baseball players and 12 percent of softball players have been injured while playing their respective sports.

It is estimated that half of all organized sports-related injuries among children can be prevented.

- Protective equipment, safe playing conditions (e.g., field surfacing, maintenance) and development and enforcement of safety rules help reduce the number and severity of sports injuries.

