



Safe Kids Sonoma County
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Protecting Yourself Year-Round; Why Spring Sports Safety is a Must!

Safe Kids Sonoma County Offers Safety Tips for Spring Sports

Sonoma County -- As winter turns into spring and temperatures increase, so does the amount of time that children spend outdoors playing spring sports. This means that the number of injuries to children can also increase.

Each year, more than 30 million children participate in sports in the United States and more than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under are treated for sports injuries. While collision and contact sports are associated with higher rates of injury, injuries from individual sports tend to be more severe.

In team sports, most injuries – 62 percent – occur during practices, not games. The most common types of sport-related injuries in children are sprains (mostly ankle), muscle strains, bone or growth plate injuries, repetitive motion injuries, and heat-related illness.

When we think of sports injuries, we tend to think of dramatic tackles or falls - such as the plays you often see on highlight reels, but young athletes are also at risk of injuries. If your coach recommends certain types of warm-ups, it's not just to make you a better athlete — it will help keep you from getting hurt.

Safe Kids Sonoma County recommends these precautions for all children playing or practicing any individual or team sport:

- Before signing up for a sport, get a general physical exam.
- Always wear appropriate protective gear for the activity — for practice as well as games — and make sure it's the right size and properly adjusted.
- Always do your warm-ups and cool-downs. If it's important before and after a game, it's important before and after practice too.
- Make sure responsible adults know and enforce the safety rules of the sport, are present to provide supervision, and are trained in first aid and CPR.
- Never "play through" an injury. Get immediate help from a coach or trainer and be sure to mention everything that hurts or aches. All coaches should have a plan for dealing with emergencies.
- If you're playing outside, wear SPF 15 or higher sunscreen.
- Follow the rules. In most sports, the rules are based not only on sportsmanship, but safety.

Last but not least: Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water or electrolyte sports drinks before and during the activity, and rest frequently during hot weather. A child can lose up to a quart of sweat during two hours of exercise, and kids get overheated more quickly than adults and cannot cool down as easily.

For more information about sports safety, visit the Safe Kids Sonoma County website at www.safekidssonomacounty.org. Safe Kids Sonoma County is a coalition of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under.

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