

Prevention and Care of Sports Injuries

by *Richard Stratton*

No, this is not a quick course in sports medicine or athletic training. I thought it might be helpful to pass along some information about how you might deal with sports injuries. First, we would like to prevent them or at least reduce your chances for getting hurt. If your sport uses protective equipment, you must wear it. Make sure your protective equipment (pads, helmets, mouthpieces, etc.) fits properly. Poor fitting equipment will not do the job it was designed for and may even increase the chances of getting hurt. Equipment that doesn't fit you correctly is likely to be uncomfortable to wear and cause you to avoid wearing it.

Take good care of your equipment. Damaged or worn out equipment will not protect you properly. In addition to the required protective equipment, girls are encouraged to wear sports bras for support when it becomes appropriate in their development. Although mouth pieces are not required in some contact sports, they are a good idea. If you have difficulty getting the store bought mouth pieces to fit properly, many dentists can make custom mouth pieces for you.

Learn the skills that it takes to play your sport. Not only will you play better, but you will also play more safely. This will help protect you and the others playing with you.

If you do get hurt make sure you coaches and parents know about the injury immediately. Even a very minor injury could become much more serious if it is not treated. Despite what some of the people you may hear on TV say, it does not make you a better athlete to "play hurt". Sure, you can continue to play even after suffering certain kinds of minor injuries, but only after your coaches have checked it out and said it is ok to continue to play.

Remember, it is ***your Right*** to participate in a safe and healthy environment but it is also ***your Responsibility*** to help keep it that way.