

**Did you know?**

- Sports and recreation injuries make up close to 20 per cent of all emergency room visits among children in Canada.
- In 1999, ice hockey, soccer, basketball, football and baseball were the top five sports that led to the most visits to emergency rooms for children 19 and under.
- Basketball, soccer, football, baseball and softball accounted for over 5,200 injuries in 15 hospitals across Canada for children 14 and under in 1998.
- 22 per cent of head and neck injuries in sports and recreation occurred in soccer, football, basketball and baseball in 1998. Changing playing rules, wearing protective gear, and using softer balls are recommended to reduce head and neck injuries.
- Encouraging children to play a variety of sports is recommended because children who play one sport year-round are more likely to have over-use injuries.
- Children are at risk for sports and recreational injuries because they are less able than adults to assess the risks involved. Young children also have less coordination, slower reaction times and less accuracy than adults.
- Children who do not wear or use protective equipment are at greater risk for sports-related injuries.

**Ready for the season?**

- At your children's annual check-up, make sure they are fit and safe to participate in their chosen sports. Discuss any concerns with your doctor.
- Fitness and conditioning prevent injuries. Children should be active 30 to 60 minutes each day, on top of participating in a particular sport.
- Kids should eat a balanced diet from each of the four food groups and drink plenty of fluids. Kids should not use athletic supplements.
- Provide the coach with emergency contact information for your child, as well as details of any medical condition or allergies.
- Ensure that the coach is prepared to handle emergencies and is trained in first aid and CPR.

[Top](#)**Set to play?**

- Get the right gear for each sport, make sure it fits, and make sure kids wear it properly every time they play.
- Kids should warm-up and stretch before every practice and game.
- Ensure the league provides adequate practice time. Practice builds skills and conditioning, as well as gives kids time to learn to play safely.
- Kids should remove all jewelry before playing, including watches, rings, earrings,

and necklaces.

- Coaches and parents should inspect the playing grounds and equipment before each practice or game to make sure everything is safe.

**Play safe to keep playing**

- Ensure kids drink plenty of fluids before, during and after play. Kids should have a fluid break at least every 15 to 20 minutes. Water or sports drinks are best.
- Supervise actively. Coaches and parents need to help kids play by the rules, for safety and fun.
- Injuries can happen at practices as well as during games. Keep safety in mind every time kids play.
- Don't "play through" an injury. Injured athletes should be examined by a physician, preferably one with experience in sports medicine.