

## Preventing Sports Injuries – Spring 2006

With the end of winter comes the arrival of spring and summer sports seasons for many children. Whether it is playing organized sports or getting together with family and friends, Advanced Pediatrics offers the following safety recommendations:

### Make sure you are healthy to start with.

- Receive annual well care and sports physicals.
- Don't play when you are sick - reduced concentration puts you at risk for injury.

### Prevent injuries with proper equipment.

- Wear properly fitting helmets specially designed for the sport you are playing.
- Wear eye protection - especially for racquet sports, basketball, baseball and hockey.
- Wear mouth guards or face masks for collision sports or those that carry a risk of head injury.
- Make sure equipment fits properly and that you are wearing recommended protective pads.
- Wear quality shoes designed for your sport and foot type.

### Prevent injuries by playing smart.

- Avoid overuse injuries by beginning slowly and gradually increasing the time and intensity of training.
- Acclimate yourself to the environment and dress appropriately.
- Limit training to 2 hours and allow adequate time to recover.
- Maintain hydration by drinking plenty of water before, during and after play.
- Follow rules and regulations of sport designed to promote safety of players.

### Prevent injuries by training correctly.

- Begin pre-season conditioning six weeks prior to the start of sports season.
- Participate in proper warm-up and stretching for at least 15 minutes prior to practice or game.

### First aid treatment for injuries (RICE).

- R-est - Rest to reduce the stress to the injured area.
- I-ce - Apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes at a time 4 times per day.
- C-ompression - Apply an elastic bandage to the injured area. (Remove for sleep.)
- E-levation - Raise the injured body part above the level of the heart to decrease blood flow.

### When to seek medical attention.

- **IMMEDIATELY for any head injury resulting in nausea, confused thinking, slurred speech, blurred vision, unsteady walking, loss of consciousness, swelling greater than 1 inch or dent in skull.**
- For headache lasting more than 3 days after a head injury.
- For any gaping wound or bleeding that won't stop after 10 minutes of direct pressure.
- If you are experiencing moderate to severe pain.
- If you have pain that interferes with daily activity or sleep.
- If you have swelling of the injured area.
- If you are unable to perform normal activities.

### Prevention of re-injury.

- Rehabilitate your injury completely before returning to play. **This is especially important if you've had a concussion. Returning to play too soon puts you at greater risk for another concussion which can lead to serious brain injury.**
- Protect the injured area with special equipment or brace.
- Gradually return to practice or competition.