

Fall Sports Send 480,000 Kids to Emergency Rooms

Every year, more than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under suffer sports injuries serious enough to require medical treatment. At least 480,000 kids each year go to emergency rooms with injuries from fall sports.



Tackles and collisions are not the only hazard. Strains and repetitive-motion injuries account for nearly half of all sports injuries to students in grade 6 and above. Immature bones, insufficient rest after an injury and poor conditioning contribute to these injuries. Parents and coaches need to make sure kids do their warmups and start the season with a physical checkup.

Kids are more likely to be injured in a practice or pickup game than in organized competition. If protective gear is required for a game, it's important for practice too. Warm up and stay hydrated for practice just as you would for a game.

In 2003, emergency rooms treated more than 200,000 children ages 5 to 14 who were injured playing basketball; nearly 186,000 injured playing football; more than 75,000 injured playing soccer; and nearly 22,000 injured doing gymnastics. These figures do not reflect injuries treated in sports medicine clinics and other non-hospital settings — by some estimates, half of all sports injuries.

In a 2000 survey conducted by Safe Kids Worldwide (formerly the National SAFE KIDS Campaign), 30 percent of parents said their child had been injured at least once while playing a team sport, 15 percent said their child had been injured more than once and about 7 percent said their child suffered a serious injury.

Safe Kids recommends these precautions for kids playing or practicing any individual or team sport:

- Make sure all protective gear is the right size and properly adjusted.
- Have adult supervision. Make sure responsible adults know and enforce the safety rules of the sport and are trained in first aid and CPR. Also, make sure the field is in safe condition.
- Never “play through” an injury. Get immediate help from a coach or trainer, and be sure to mention everything that hurts or aches.
- Rest often and rehydrate with water or an electrolyte sports drink. In two hours of activity, kids can lose a quart of fluid by sweating.
- Follow the rules. In most sports, the rules are based on not only sportsmanship, but safety.

For more information about sports safety, visit the [Safety Tips](#) page or review the 2005 statement from [Youth Sports Safety Month](#).