

Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries

I. Basic Concepts

- The first line of defense in the treatment of soccer injuries is to prevent them. This is accomplished by a well organized program, a proper warm-up, and adherence to the Laws of the Game. **ALWAYS ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION!**
- Proper equipment (shin guards, appropriate/tied shoes, no jewelry, appropriate uniform)
- Upkeep and monitoring of playing surface
- Ample water supply and breaks.
- Prior knowledge of existing conditions (asthma, sprains, etc.)
- If a player is injured, inform parents and follow-up within 48 hours.
- Keep a First-Aid kit accessible
- Have medical release forms, information forms and treatment forms signed by parents for each player.

II. Basic First Aid Information

- R.I.C.E.**-Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation
- Strains are the stretching of tendon or muscle fibers, recommended treatment: **R.I.C.E.**
- Sprains are the stretching of ligaments, recommended treatment: R.I.C.E.
- Dislocations and Fractures involve deformation or breaking of bones, recommended treatment: seek medical treatment **Immediately.**
- Cramps are a result of an insufficient flow of blood to the muscle and can be caused by a blow to the muscle, insufficient consumption of fluids, poor diet or fatigue. Recommended treatment: massage and stretch
- Heat Exhaustion is exhibited by signs of weakness, pale skin, cold and clammy skin, pupils slightly dilated, and a rapid pulse. Recommended treatment: remove from the game immediately, lie down in a cool or shaded area, give plenty of liquids and if improvement is minimal, should see a doctor.

Heat Stroke is a life-threatening situation where the body has lost a significant amount of fluid and salt. Exhibited by high body temperature, hot to the touch, dry and flushed skin, strong rapid pulse, and player is dizzy and weak. Recommended treatment: give a cold bath (pouring ice water over body) and give plenty of cold fluids, get to medical care immediately.

Blisters are often caused by poor fitting footwear, usually shoes that are too big (so the player can "grow into them") and/or wet, causing excessive rubbing against the skin. Recommended treatment: apply adhesive tape to the reddened area and do not use gauze (the sore will rub against the tape rather than the skin.)

Concussions are caused by a blow to the head and are mild bruising of brain tissue. Recommended treatment: get player checked immediately by a physician.

II. Rules of thumb when handling injuries

- When an accident occurs, stop all activity.
- Look for any deformity, discoloration, bleeding or shock.
- Ask questions. Have the player explain where it hurts.
- Stay calm, inspire confidence and reassurance in the injured player
- Follow up all injuries by informing parents. Especially Head Injuries!
- Don't move the player if the injury looks serious.
- Seek professional help when appropriate