Common Football Treatment, Injuries, and Prevention

P.R.I.C.E. Treatment Method

Definition
P. Protect — Protect the injury from further harm by using a brace, splint, immobilizer, or ACE bandage.
R. Rest — Rest the injured area by not participating in activities that are painful to perform.
I. Ice — Ice the area for 20 minutes every 2 hours. Never use heat because it increases swelling.
C. Compression — Compress the swelling using an ACE bandage or compression wrap to limit any further swelling. When wrapping the injured area, start at the furthest point away from the body and move toward the body. Be sure that you are not cutting off circulation.
E. Elevate — Elevate the injured area above the heart to pull blood flow away from the injured area.

Common Injuries

Hamstring Strain
During sprinting activities, the hamstring muscles can be forcibly stretched beyond their limits and the muscle tissue can be torn. A tear in a muscle is referred to as a strain and, depending on its severity, it is classified as a first, second or third degree strain.

Sprained Ankle
A sprained ankle is one of the most common injuries in football. It refers to soft tissue damage (mainly ligaments) around the ankle, usually caused when the ankle is twisted inwards. In addition to the ligaments, the capsule which surrounds the ankle joint can also be damaged. The damage causes bleeding within the tissues, which produces a swollen ankle and ankle pain.

Knee Cartilage Tear
There are two menisci within each knee joint that are made from tough fibrocartilage — hence the use of the term cartilage for this injury.

As the knee joint bends, the thigh bone usually rolls, spins and glides on the top surface of the shin bone. However, if there is rotation caused by a twist whilst the joint is bearing weight, the menisci can get jammed and nipped in between the two bones. If the force is sufficient, a tear of the meniscus will occur.

Cartilage tears are usually accompanied by pain and knee swelling. If it is a small tear it may simply settle down. However, with larger cartilage tears, the flap of torn cartilage may interfere with joint movement.

Hernia
Hernia and groin problems are common in football where the pelvic region is subject to large stresses during kicking, sprinting and turning. Common conditions are Inguinal Hernia and Gilmore’s Groin (also known as Sports Hernia). Following activity the athlete will be stiff and sore in the groin region. The day after, getting out of bed or a car will be difficult.

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 224.273.2416
In the early stages, athletes may be able to continue playing their sport, but the problem usually gets progressively worse. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

**Anterior Cruciate Ligament**  
The Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) lies deep within the knee joint, connecting the thigh bone with the shin bone. Its function is to prevent excessive forward movement of the shin in relation to the thigh and also to prevent excessive rotation at the knee joint. The ACL can be injured in several different ways during football, most notably by landing from a jump onto a bent knee when twisting, or landing on a knee that is over-extended.

**Head Injuries**  
A concussion is a brain injury usually caused by a sudden jolt or a blow to the head or neck. This can occur from a collision with another player or the ground. An athlete does not need to be knocked out or have memory loss to have suffered a concussion. In fact, most athletes who suffer a sports-related concussion DO NOT lose consciousness.

You may observe that an athlete with a concussion:  
• Appears dazed, stunned or confused  
• Forgets plays  
• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent  
• Exhibits unsteadiness  
• Moves clumsily  
• Answers questions slowly  
• Has a behavior or personality change

An athlete with signs of a concussion should be removed from play immediately and not allowed to return until evaluated by a doctor. Do not leave an athlete alone after a concussion.

**Fractures**  
It's hard to tell a dislocated bone from a broken bone, but the basic first aid is the same. Symptoms include a visibly misshapen limb, swelling intense pain, limited mobility, and numbness. Keep the athlete still and calm, contact your healthcare provider or 911 if the suspected broken bone is the back, neck, head, hip, pelvis or upper leg.

**Prevention**

**Equipment**  
Obtaining high-quality equipment that fits well and is not damaged, worn-out, or undersized is crucial.

**Training & Conditioning**  
Proper conditioning, flexibility and functional movement training may reduce the risk of non-contact injuries.

**Warming Up**  
Start by moving at a slower, more relaxed pace and gradually increase intensity.

**Stretching**  
Stretch only after having warmed up; a cold muscle is more likely to tear when stretched.

**Nutrition**  
Proper nutrition before and during your workout will help you maintain blood sugar levels and keep you adequately hydrated for peak performance.