Common Injuries

Shoulder Injuries
Different types of shoulder injuries are common in hockey. They most often are caused by a collision with the boards or ice. You should seek immediate medical care when the collar bone appears deformed or if the athlete indicates the shoulder is out of socket. These indicate serious joint abnormalities that require immediate treatment or rehabilitation.

Knee Injuries
A common knee injury in ice hockey is a medial collateral ligament (MCL) sprain or tear, which occurs when the knee is forced inward during a collision. The collision is usually with another player and the knee is hit on the outer side, causing pain on the inner side. Athletes with a damaged MCL often experience pain, which can be followed by a lot of swelling within 24 hours.

- For sudden knee injuries, athletes should see their orthopedic doctor if pain and/or swelling persist after a day of P.R.I.C.E. treatment.

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 puck or stick in the head, or the head striking the ice during a fall. You may observe that an athlete with a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused
- Forgets plays
- Moves clumsily
- Exhibits unsteadiness
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Answers questions slowly

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• Has a behavior or personality change
• Can't recall events either before or after hit
• Loses consciousness

An athlete with signs of 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.

Sprains and Strains

Sprains:
A sprain is an injury to a ligament, the tough, fibrous tissue that connects bones to other bones. Ligament injuries involve a stretching or tearing of this tissue. A sprain typically occurs when an athlete falls on an outstretched arm, lands on the side of their foot, or twists a knee with the foot planted firmly on the ground. The usual signs and symptoms of a muscle sprain include pain, swelling, bruising, and the loss of the ability to move and use the joint. Sometimes athletes feel a pop or tear when the injury happens. However, these signs and symptoms can vary in intensity, depending on the severity of the sprain.

Strains:
A strain is an injury to either a muscle or a tendon, the tissue that connects muscles to bones. Depending on the severity of the injury, a strain may be a simple over-stretch of the muscle or tendon, or it can result in a partial or complete tear. A strain is caused by twisting or pulling a muscle or tendon. Strains can be acute or chronic. An acute strain is caused by trauma or an injury such as a blow to the body; it can also be caused by improperly lifting heavy objects or over-stressing the muscles. Chronic strains are usually the result of prolonged, repetitive movement of the muscles and tendons.

Prevention

Equipment
Ice hockey requires properly-fitted protective 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 skating at a slower, more relaxed pace and gradually work up to full speed. As the level of activity increases, the muscles burn more oxygen and their temperature rises. When perspiration begins, the muscles are warmed up and ready for a workout.

Stretching
Stretch only after having warmed up; a cold muscle is more likely to tear when stretched. Stretching after a workout increases flexibility and reduces stress on joints. Perform stretches slowly, holding each position for at least five seconds.

Nutrition
Proper nutrition before and during your workout will help you maintain blood sugar levels and keep you adequately hydrated for peak performance. A doctor or physical therapist can assist you in developing a proper strength, flexibility and nutrition plan.

The AMITA Health Orthopedics Institute is a national leader in musculoskeletal care, offering comprehensive and advanced care for a wide range of conditions. We are proactive about keeping you active. That is why our multi-disciplinary orthopedic teams enlist a comprehensive leading edge approach to the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries.

Our team of highly-experienced board-certified physicians, surgeons, therapists and nurses are dedicated to providing patients of all ages with a personalized treatment program that is customized for your condition, lifestyle and personal preferences.

We work hard to prevent sports-related injuries, which have become increasingly more common among athletes, especially children. AMITA Health Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons keep kids active and participating in the extracurricular activities they enjoy by delivering educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic care.

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 847.385.7120 or 708.245.6051

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