Common Sports-related Injuries
A parent’s guide to prevention and treatment

*All injuries are different and should be seen by a physician if warranted. The following are general guidelines.

Sprains
A sprain occurs when ligaments are stretched too far, which can result in tear or loss of elasticity in the ligament. Often times athletes will feel a sharp pain and may hear or feel a pop.

Wearing proper equipment and protective gear, like an ankle brace, can help prevent sprains. Making sure that the muscles surrounding your ligaments are strong is also crucial in preventing sprains. A proper warm up and cool down help to prevent sprains as well.

First Aid for a Sprain
P. Protect – Protect the injury from further harm by using a brace, splint, immobilizer, or ace bandage.
R. Rest – Rest the injured area keeping the athlete from activities that are painful to perform.
I. Ice – Ice the area for 20 min every 2 hours. Never use heat because that will cause the area to swell even more.
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 towards 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. Use pillows to elevate the injured area.

Strains
A strain occurs when a tendon or muscle is stretched too far and either tears or loses elasticity. Often times sharp pain when it initially occurs and you may hear or feel a pop.

Stretching is a great way to prevent strains. Make sure that your athlete is not bouncing when you stretching. The best technique is the stretch and hold method.

Hold the stretch for 20–30 seconds, rest, and then repeat approximately three times.

A dynamic warm up is also important in preventing strains. When performing a dynamic warm up, athletes go through motions that they use while playing your sport. For example: high knees, high kicks, lunges, grapevines, etc.

First Aid for a Strain
P. Protect – Protect the injury from further harm by using a brace, splint, immobilizer, or ace bandage.
R. Rest – Rest the injured area by keeping the athlete from activities that are painful to perform.
I. Ice – Ice the area for 20 min every 2 hours. Never use heat because that will cause the area to swell even more.
C. Compression – Compress the swelling using an ace bandage or a compression wrap to limit any further swelling. When wrapping the injured area start at the furthest point away from the body and move towards 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. At night you can use pillows to elevate the injured area.

For more information, or to contact one of 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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Tendonitis

Tendonitis occurs when there is inflammation of the tendons, usually due to overuse. Most people with tendonitis will often complain of a dull, achy pain. Unfortunately, there is not a lot one can do to prevent tendonitis. The best thing that can be done is to ensure that you are getting plenty rest from your activity and the proper recovery. Proper technique or body mechanics for your specific activity may also reduce your risk of tendonitis.

First Aid for Tendonitis

Ice and rest are most crucial to treating tendonitis. Also, remember about the PRICE:

- **P.** Protect – Protect the injury from further harm by using a brace, splint, immobilizer, or ace bandage.
- **R.** Rest – Rest the injured area by keeping the athlete from activities that are painful to perform.
- **I.** Ice – Ice the area for 20 min every 2 hours. Never use heat because that will cause the area to swell even more.
- **C.** Compression – Compress the swelling using an ace bandage or a compression wrap to limit any further swelling. When wrapping the injured area start at the furthest point away from the body and move towards 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. At night you can use pillows to elevate the injured area.

Cramping

Cramping occurs when your body is not properly hydrated or has too low of a salt concentration and your muscles contract or spasm.

To prevent cramping, athletes drink plenty of water prior to, during, and after their activity. If participating in an endurance activity or an activity that is extremely demanding, then a sport drink will help replace the salt you lose from sweating. Avoid sugary, caffeinated, or energy drinks. These types of drinks are known as diuretics and cause dehydration.

First Aid for Cramping

For immediate relief put the cramped muscle on a stretch and squeeze the muscle. You can also put the muscle on a stretch and massage it with ice. Drinking a sport drink, pickle juice, mustard packet, or any other item with a high salt content will help prevent the cramp from returning.

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.

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