

As another school year begins, the nation's emergency physicians are urging students, parents, teachers and coaches to promote safety, specifically when it comes to school athletics. The most common sports-related injuries in children range from sprains and strains to serious growth plate injuries and spinal cord injuries.

"We want kids to be active, play sports, exercise and have fun," said Dr. Sandra Schneider, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "But emergency physicians treat sports-related injuries in emergency departments every day and some of these injuries are very serious. It's important to make sure that children follow the rules and play it safe and wear the appropriate safety gear."

### **Sports Injury Facts**

- More than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year, according to the National Center for Sports Safety (NCSS).
- Injuries directly related to sports and recreational activities are responsible for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children in the United States (NCSS).
- More than half of the 7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur each year are sustained by people between the ages of five and 24, according to the CDC.

Children ages five to 14 make up nearly 40 percent of all sports-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments. That percentage goes up and the severity of the injury increases with a child's age (NCSS).

### **Sports Injury**

#### **Prevention Tips**

- Wear the proper gear, including helmets, wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, mouth guards and any other gear that may be necessary for the activity or particular sport. Anyone, especially children, should also always wear helmets when biking, skating and rollerblading.
- Use safety equipment properly and be certain that it is in good working condition. Equipment that is not used correctly may be uncomfortable to wear and might not offer the appropriate body protection.
- Practice your skills. Make sure people properly exercise and strengthen certain muscles used in a particular activity or sport. Correct movement and alignment can play a role in preventing injuries, especially in sports such as baseball, football, softball, soccer and basketball among others.
- Be careful with the temperature outside. Parents and coaches should make sure that athletes are appropriately dressed and hydrated for any particular weather condition.

"All kids should have fun this year in school, on the playground and on the athletics field," said Dr. Schneider. "Injuries are going to happen, but there are many things you can do to help prevent them. We want to keep everyone on the field of play and not in the emergency department."

For more information on sports-related injuries and other health-related topics, visit [www.EmergencyCareForYou.org](http://www.EmergencyCareForYou.org).