



Children's Health  
Education Center™

*A member of Children's Hospital and Health System.*



To learn more about keeping your family safe, contact  
Safe Kids Southeast Wisconsin at **(414) 390-2178**,  
**safekidswi.org • BlueKids.org**

## Sports safety: Get into the game

Through sports, kids acquire good fitness habits, build high self-esteem and learn valuable life skills like teamwork and discipline. To avoid an injury, teach your child to play safely.

### Parents: Before the whistle blows, do the safety check!

#### GET READY ...

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
My child understands the basic skills of the sport before he or she gets into the game.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child drinks plenty of fluids before, during and after playing sports and eats a well-balanced diet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the season begins, my child gets in shape for the sport and has regular checkups with his or her doctor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child's coach has emergency contact information and a plan in case I cannot be reached.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I carpool, I make sure every child has his or her own child safety seat or seat belt, and sits in the back seat (if younger than age 12).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### GET SET ...

My child warms up and stretches before playing sports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child always wears the right, properly-fitted, protective gear and uses sunblock when playing outdoor sports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field surfaces and playing areas are inspected and safe before my child begins playing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child plays team sports under the supervision of a coach and a certified athletic trainer.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### GO!

My child is properly supervised at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child takes regular rest and drink breaks at practice and during the game.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child does not "play through an injury."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents, coaches and players always practice good sportsmanship and play by the rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*If a certified athletic trainer is not available, make sure your child's coach is certified in CPR and has a first-aid kit on hand. Coaches and certified athletic trainers should have an emergency medical plan for all practices and games and a copy of your child's up-to-date medical history form.

## Protect your child from a serious injury

**Limping.** If your child is limping, he or she should not continue playing. Every joint should have a full and pain-free range of motion in order to play again.

**Concussion.** If your child has a known or suspected concussion, he or she should not return to play until he or she has been evaluated and given permission by an appropriate health care professional.

### Signs of a concussion include:

- Feeling dazed, dizzy, lightheaded or “seeing stars.”
- Memory loss such as trouble remembering things that happened right before and after the injury occurred.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Headache.
- Blurred vision and sensitivity to light.
- Slurred speech or saying things that don’t make sense.
- Difficulty concentrating, thinking or making decisions.
- Difficulty with coordination or balance such as being unable to catch a ball or do other easy tasks.
- Feeling anxious or irritable for no apparent reason.
- Feeling overly tired.

**Dehydration.** Dehydration puts kids at an increased risk for heat illness and injury. It affects the way they feel and how they play. Make fluids a part of your child’s pre-game routine. Encourage your child to drink regularly when playing sports.

### Signs of dehydration include:

- Thirst.
- Dizziness.
- Irritability.
- Nausea.
- Headache.
- Weakness.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle cramps.

### Tips to keep you moving:

- **Stay active during the off-season.** It helps to remain fit and active year-round. Injuries occur when you try to get into shape too quickly.
- **Give your child time off.** Ideally, give your child one season off (two-three months) from his or her primary sport every year. For instance, don’t play baseball all year. During the off-season, try to avoid sports like swimming, tennis, volleyball, etc. These sports use the same motion and can cause overuse injuries.
- **Don’t ignore pain.** “No pain, no gain” is not a good motto for the young athlete. Soreness can occur after a difficult workout and will last a day or so. Pain affects how the athlete plays (limping, slower, less accurate, etc.) and usually lasts longer than soreness. Pain should be evaluated before it turns into a more serious injury.
- **Never return to play after a concussion on the same day.** All concussions should have medical evaluation and clearance before returning to the sport.

## Two sports that require protective gear

Nearly 6 million kids play in baseball and softball leagues. More than 115,000 children require emergency medical care for injuries each year. The head is involved in more baseball and softball injuries than any other body part.

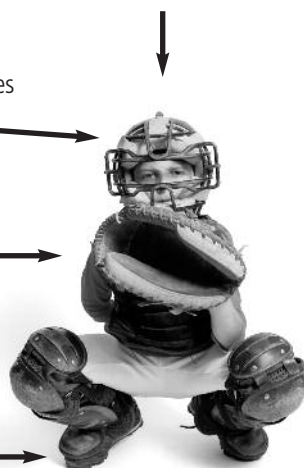
Use helmets that meet NOCSAE standards.

Attach face masks to batters’ and catchers’ helmets to prevent injuries to the eyes, mouth and face.

Make sure catchers wear full protective gear and use a catcher’s mitt at all times.

Make sure boys wear athletic cups.

Wear rubber (not metal) cleats.



More than 8 million kids play soccer every year. More than 75,000 kids are treated in emergency rooms for soccer injuries each year. These include broken bones, concussions, torn ligaments and sprains.

Be sure soccer goals have padded goal posts and are anchored securely.

Wear shin pads that reach the upper calf and are kept in place by socks.

Use a synthetic, non-absorbent ball when playing fields are wet. Soggy balls get heavy, which increases the chance of head injury.

Wear rubber (not metal) cleats.

