If your child is participating in organized sports, make sure he or she has a pre-participation physical exam, or PPE, performed by a doctor before playing. This can help rule out any potential medical conditions that may place your athlete at risk.

Sports safety tips

Stretch before games and practices
- Warming up and stretching before play can release muscle tension and help prevent sports-related injuries, such as muscle tears or sprains.
- Set aside time before every practice and game to warm up.

Wear appropriate gear
- Appropriate and properly fitted sports gear during practice and games can help avoid minor and serious injuries.
- The right equipment may include helmets, shin guards, mouth guards, ankle braces, shoes with rubber cleats and sunscreen.

Get training in first aid, CPR and injury prevention
- If you are a coach, establish safety guidelines athletes, parents and coaches will follow during every practice and game, such as hydration breaks and a proper warm-up.
- Learn ways to prevent, recognize and respond to concussions and overuse injuries.
- Reward players for communicating any pain or injury they may have during practices or games.

Prepare kids for the demands of participating in a sport

In this issue:
- Sports safety
- Preventing concussions in young athletes
- Safety tidbits

To sign up for our monthly newsletter, Visit ukhealthcare.uky.edu/safekids.
Remember:
Loss of consciousness only occurs in a small percentage of concussions.

Make rest a priority
- Rest all players during each practice and game.
- Kids should have at least one or two days off from any particular sport each week.
- Have an off-season: It is recommended that kids get 10 consecutive weeks of rest from any one sport every year.
Check out the Safe Kids Sports Safety Checklist

Remember to hydrate
- Encourage children to drink water before, during and after athletic activities or play.
- Make sure young athletes drink fluids (water is the best option) 30 minutes before the activity begins and every 15-20 minutes during activity.
- Mandatory fluid breaks during practice and games are a great idea – don’t wait for a child to tell you he or she is thirsty.

How much water should a kid drink while playing sports?

For every 20 minutes of play, a young athlete should drink about 10 gulps of water.

1 gulp = ¼ oz. of fluid

A teen should drink about 20 gulps.
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends: 5 oz. for an 88-pound child every 20 minutes, and 9 oz. for a 132-pound adolescent every 20 minutes

Preventing concussions in young athletes

The facts:
- All concussions are serious.
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help recovery and prevent further injury, or even death.

Steps to prevention:
- Ensure your child follows the coaches’ rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage good sportsmanship.
- Make sure your child wears the right protective gear during all practices and games.
- All gear should fit properly, be well-maintained and be worn consistently and correctly.

Suspect a concussion?
Remove from play!
A child may have a concussion if he or she:
- Appears dazed or confused.
- Forgets an instruction or play.
- Moves clumsily or has poor balance.
Safety tidbits

Responding to signs of heat illness
Move the athlete to shade, and cool the body with cold water. Have the athlete drink cool water, remove any equipment and excess clothing and lie down, raising his or her legs 8-12 inches.
Make sure the athlete gets checked by a doctor or medical professional and is cleared before returning to play.

Call 911:
• If you suspect heatstroke.
• If the athlete’s heat exhaustion or dehydration does not improve or worsens.
Treat heatstroke victims right away by immersing them in cold water before the ambulance arrives. If immersion is not an option, soak the child with cold water from a shower, hose or soaking towel.

Concussion symptoms often reported by athletes:
• Shows mood, behavior or personality changes.
• Cannot recall events prior to a hit or fall.

When in doubt, sit them out!
Before allowing athletes to return to play:
• Athletes should be evaluated and cleared by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion before returning to play in any sport.
• A repeat injury that occurs before the brain is allowed to fully recover can be very dangerous and cause long-term disability.
• Children, especially young teens, require longer recovery times and a more conservative treatment approach than adults.
• Immediately after a concussion, complete cognitive rest is beneficial to help reduce symptoms. This includes no school, no homework, no computer, no games, no texting and no TV. Light cognitive activity can be resumed after significant improvement at rest.

For more information, contact Safe Kids at 859-323-1153 or visit www.safekidsfayettecounty.com.

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