




BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. BC Children's is an academic health centre affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Child & Family Research Institute. For more information, please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, please visit www.phsa.ca.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sports injury prevention tips from BC Children's Hospital April 27, 2009

Vancouver, B.C. – Being physically active is an important factor in the healthy physical and emotional development of children that also builds a foundation for a lifetime of fitness. As parents register their kids for soccer, tennis and baseball this spring and purchase bicycles, skateboards and rollerblades for summer, it is important to know that many common sports related injuries can be prevented.

“Each year at BC Children's, we treat nearly 500 sports related injuries, most of which are sprains and strains,” says Dr. Ran Goldman, Emergency Department Medical Director at BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. “By enrolling kids in sports that are appropriate for their ability and ensuring they are properly prepared to play, parents can help their children in having a safe and fun summer.”

Other injuries treated at BC Children's over the spring and summer months include dehydration and heat exhaustion, fractures, repetitive and over use injuries, as well as minor concussions.

BC Children's has these tips so kids and teens stay safe while playing sports this summer:

- Children should participate in sports that are appropriate for their age, skill level and physical development. It is important to note that children younger than eight years old are not as coordinated as older children and have slower reaction times.
- Kids need to wear the right protective gear that is properly sized and fitted for them. A properly fitted and adjusted helmet should be worn when riding a bicycle, skateboarding, inline skating or ATVing.
- Drinking water should be available at all times during physical activity to ensure kids stay hydrated. The amount of water needed will vary depending on the child's age, weight, the intensity of the activity, and the weather. It's even better for kids than sports or energy drinks.
- Warming up is important before undertaking any physical activity, even for kids. This can be as simple as light jogging and easy stretches to raise the heart rate and warm the muscles. After sports, it's best to walk around for a few minutes and do some stretching to cool down and get their breathing back to normal.

- If your child is sick or injured, it's a good time to take a break from sports and exercise. Rest is important to healing and getting well. By returning too fast, there is a strong risk of re-injury.
- Sunscreen should be applied about half an hour before playing sports to avoid sunburn. Re-apply every couple of hours or even more frequently if swimming or sweating.

It is recommended that all parents and caregivers learn first aid to know what to do should a child be injured. Information is available from HealthLink BC online at www.healthlinkbc.ca or by calling 8-1-1.