

## Why Is This Program Important for Volunteer Coaches?

The “What To Do About Youth Athletic Injuries” program will enable coaches to do a better job of taking care of injuries when they occur.

The Pennsylvania Division of the American Trauma Society encourages coaches to learn more about child-athletes, prevention strategies for sports-related injuries and the steps to take when an injury does occur.

Children cannot be compared to adults when it comes to athletic competition. Their physical abilities, as well as mental and cognitive capabilities are different. A child’s emotional level, psychological development and attention span must be taken into consideration or injuries will be more prevalent.

More than 30 million youth participate in organized sports in the United States. Children gain many benefits from sports participation: improved fitness, coordination, self-discipline and teamwork. Participating in sports also promotes a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment.

How you handle an injury can make the difference between a temporary inconvenience or a life-long injury.

## For More Information on Youth Athletic Injuries, Check out the Following Websites:

[American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance](http://www.aahperd.org)  
[www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)

[American College of Sports Medicine](http://www.acsm.org)  
[www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)

[American Lung Association](http://www.lungusa.org)  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

[American Red Cross](http://www.redcross.org)  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

[Eye Injuries](http://www.uic.edu/com/eyc/education/eyefacts/SportsEyeInjuries.htm)  
[www.uic.edu/com/eyc/education/eyefacts/SportsEyeInjuries.htm](http://www.uic.edu/com/eyc/education/eyefacts/SportsEyeInjuries.htm)

[Mouth Injuries](http://www.ada.org/public/topics/index.asp)  
<http://www.ada.org/public/topics/index.asp>

[National Athletic Trainers’ Association](http://www.nata.org)  
[www.nata.org](http://www.nata.org)

[PA Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports](http://www.health.state.pa.us)  
[www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us)

[Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association](http://www.piaa.org)  
[www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org)

[Sports Safety and Prevention](http://www.sportssafety.net)  
[www.sportssafety.net](http://www.sportssafety.net)

“What To Do About



Youth Athletic Injuries”

## A Prevention Program for Volunteer Coaches

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**About 3.5 million children ages 14 and under suffer from sports and recreation-related injuries each year. In 1997, youth injuries in 29 sports cost the US public over 49 billion dollars.** - Consumer Product Safety Commission

## Knowing Your Child-Athletes



As a coach, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of your child-athletes. This means you should know each child's name, what he or she is doing and where each child is at all times. Know their capabilities and personalities. A sudden change in either could be a sign of illness or injury.

## What To Look For:

**Confusion** - cannot remember simple things or complete routine tasks. Coaches should ask the athlete questions about the day of the week, their parents' names, etc.

**Irritability** - a change in temperament.

**Belligerence** - easily frustrated, compounded by confusion and irritability.



**Lightheadedness**

**Lack of Coordination** - when out of the norm for a particular child.

**Fatigue** - in excess of what would normally be anticipated.

**Important:** A disoriented athlete should not be allowed to return to the practice/game, and should be checked by a physician as soon as possible.

## Common Injuries

**Contusion** - (or bruise) injury to soft tissue.

**Strain** - injury to muscles or tendons.

**Sprain** - injury to a ligament.

**Hairline Fracture** - thin fracture where fragments remain in alignment and do not separate.

**Open Fracture** - fracture causes broken bone to protrude through skin.

**Stress Fracture** - weak spots or small cracks in the bone.



## The Bare Necessities

Every child-athlete should have their family doctor complete a thorough pre-season physical examination before participating in a sport or recreational activity.

Coaches should have athletes complete a warm-up session prior to any practice or game. **(ex. calisthenics and jogging)**

Coaches should also have athletes complete a cool-down session after any practice or game. **(ex. stretching)**

## Prevention Plan

### Avoiding Sport and Recreational Injuries

1. Develop an emergency action plan and make sure all assistant coaches and volunteers know the plan.
2. Always have an accessible, working phone at practices and games to ensure that emergency personnel can be contacted quickly if needed. Coaches should have each child's emergency information available at all times.
3. Make sure that a first aid kit is with you at all practices and games.
4. Always have water available for your athletes and give them numerous breaks to prevent dehydration and possible heat illnesses.
5. Examine your playing field(s) and other surfaces before practices and games for potentially dangerous obstacles.
6. Regularly check the player's safety equipment before practices and games to make sure it is being worn correctly. Check for cracked or missing pieces. Prevent tripping over unused equipment by storing it away from the playing area.
7. Encourage your athletes to be aware of unsafe playing conditions and to report them to you as soon as possible.
8. Parents should check with their family doctor before allowing their child to participate in practices and games.
9. Make sure athletes are aware that items such as gum, cough drops and hard candy are things to avoid during practices and games.