

Soccer is one of the most popular sports in the world and the fastest growing team sport in the United States. Although soccer provides an enjoyable form of aerobic exercise and helps develop balance, agility, coordination, and a sense of teamwork, soccer players must be aware of the risks for injury. Injury prevention, early detection, and treatment can keep kids (and adults) on the field long-term.

Injuries to the lower extremities are the most common in soccer. These injuries may be traumatic, such as a kick to the leg or a twist to the knee or ankle, or result from overuse of a muscle, tendon, or bone.

#### Some common soccer injuries are:

- Lower extremity injuries (Sprains and Strains)
- Overuse lower extremity injuries (Shin splint, Patellar tendinitis, Achilles tendinitis)
- Upper extremity injuries ( Sprains and Strains)
- Head, neck and face injuries

#### How are soccer injuries treated:

Participation should be stopped immediately until an injury is evaluated and treated properly. Most injuries are minor and can be treated by a short period of Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (RICE). If a trained health care professional such as a sports medicine physician or athletic trainer is available to evaluate an injury, often a decision can be made to allow an athlete to continue playing immediately. The athlete should return to play only when clearance is granted by a health care professional.

Overuse injuries can be treated with a short period of rest, which means that the athlete can continue to perform or practice some activities with modifications. In many cases, pushing through pain can be harmful, especially for stress fractures, knee ligament injuries, and any injuries to the head or neck. Contact your doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment of any injury that does not improve after a few days rest.

You should return to play **ONLY** when clearance is granted by a health care professional

#### How can soccer injuries be prevented:

- Have a pre-season physical examination and follow your doctor's recommendations
- Use well-fitting cleats and shin guards
- Be aware of poor field conditions that can increase injury rates
- Hydrate adequately, waiting till you get thirsty is often too late to hydrate properly
- maintain proper fitness, injury rates are higher in athletes who have not adequately prepared physically
- Avoid overuse injuries, more is not always better!

The above information is from: **STOP SPORTS INJURIES**