

Preventing Child Sports Injuries

Almost 40 million American children take part in organized sports every year, with millions more taking part in informal recreational activities. In Oregon, playing sports like football, basketball and baseball are often a major part of growing up. Our outstanding natural facilities and recreational amenities allow our children to get involved in everything from surfing and skiing, to equestrian sports, mountain climbing, cross country running...the list is almost endless.

Unfortunately, [Portland child injury attorneys](#) are frequently in demand. Of the 40 million children participating in organized sports, it's a fact that more than one in 20, under the age of 15, will end up in hospital emergency rooms being treated for sports-related injuries.

Clearly, some [sports injuries](#) are more serious than others, and they can be a parent's worst nightmare. Portland child injury lawyers often have to deal with cases of what are referred to as a [catastrophic injury](#), which can leave a child struggling with a disability for the rest of his or her life. This type of injury would include accidents that lead to paralysis, disfigurement, and sometimes, horribly, [brain injury](#). Thankfully, most injuries are not so severe, but parents often struggle with the dilemma of whether to protect their children from unnecessary risk, or to allow them to take part in healthy activities with their friends and peers.

What are the risks?

All sports carry some degree of risk, even something as simple as bowling! Because a child's body is constantly growing and changing, they are more prone to some types of injuries.

These include:

- Sprains and strains. Often confused as being one in the same, sprains actually affect ligaments, while strains are muscle injuries. Ligaments are tough tissues that connect two or more bones at a joint. Ankle sprains would be an extremely common injury.
- Growth plate injuries. As we grow, tissues are formed at the end of our longer bones, such as the forearm, upper and lower leg bones, fingers and foot bones. When we stop growing, these tissues are replaced with solid bone. Injuries to growth plate areas can cause complications in later life, and should be attended to by an orthopedic specialist.
- Repetitive motion injuries. These won't always show up on x-rays, but can be extremely painful. Stress fractures and tendonitis can occur by putting repeated stress on a bone or joint, or over use of muscles and tendons.
- Heat related injuries. These include dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat injuries can be as dangerous and lethal as any other type of injury, and parents, coaches and trainers should always be on the look-out for symptoms. These include dizziness, nausea, dilated pupils, disorientation, fainting spells, hot and dry skin and a weak pulse.

Preventing sports injuries

While injuries can happen in any sport, parents can take steps to prevent injuries. By following a few basic guidelines, it will hopefully never become necessary to call on the services of a Portland child injury attorney.

- Look for well organized school and community club sports facilities that are well equipped and properly maintained. Find out if the coaches involved are trained in first aid and CPR. Certified Athletic Trainers on staff would be a real bonus. These individuals are specially trained to prevent, recognize and treat athletic injuries.
- Ensure your child not only has the proper protective equipment, but that he or she uses it as well.
- Sports drinks aren't just commercial gimmicks. They contain minerals and nutrients to help prevent dehydration. If that fails, however, good old-fashioned water is very effective in preventing dehydration and other heat-related injuries. Make sure your child has access to some form of hydration when practicing or playing sports.
- Stretching before *and after* a training session or game is very important in preventing the types of soft tissue and muscle injuries that are common in many sports. Encourage your child to make stretching an integral part of his routine.

Treating injuries

Severe injuries obviously will require attention from trained medical personnel. Severe injuries include obvious fractures and dislocations, as well as extreme and prolonged swelling or continuous and severe pain. If the injury was caused by negligence, it would also be advisable to contact one of the better Portland child injury attorneys after getting your child the treatment they need. In most cases, thankfully, soft tissue injuries like sprains and strains, as well as non-fracture injuries to bones (and these make up the vast majority of sports injuries to young people) can be treated with what's commonly referred to as RICE.

- “R”est the injured area for at least 48 hours. If the injury is to a leg, stay off it completely.
- “I”ce the affected area four to eight times per day, for 20 minutes at a time.
- “C”ompress injured ankles, knees, wrists or elbows with elastic wraps, air casts, special boots or splints, to help reduce swelling and lend support to the injured joint.
- “E”levate the injured area above the level of the heart. This helps reduce blood flow to the affected region and will keep swelling to a minimum. Use a pillow, if necessary, to prop up an injured limb.

In most cases, accidents that lead to sports injuries are just that—accidents. If you think your child has been injured through someone else's negligence, however, or that the injury was a

deliberate attempt to cause physical damage, you should seriously consider contacting one of the best Portland child injury lawyers to investigate the case and advise you on the best course of action.