

### Did you know ...

Over 50% of childhood injuries that occur in schools are due to physical activity.<sup>3</sup>

Males between the ages of 15-34 have the highest number of sport and recreation related injuries.<sup>4</sup>

Anabolic steroid use to improve sport performance and body image plays a role in sport and recreation injury.<sup>4</sup>



10/99

## Making Sport and Recreation Activities Safe

### What is a sport or recreational injury?

Injuries can occur during organized team play or during a game of 'scrimmage' in the park. Common types of injuries in sport include:

- cuts and bruises
- fractures and broken bones
- sprains and strains
- head injuries

More serious injuries involving trauma to the head or spine can lead to paralysis or death, therefore, it is important to take all safety precautions.

### How to Prevent Sport Injuries

- Wear the correct **EQUIPMENT** for the activity you are participating in everytime you play. Make sure it fits properly and is safety approved. Learn how to care for and clean your equipment. Replace damaged equipment immediately.
- **WARM UP** properly before any type of exercise to prevent injury.
- **PLAY FAIR.** Aggressive or unsportsman-like behaviour is a common cause of injury and can easily be eliminated. Be a team player and play by the rules so everyone will enjoy the game.
- Play in a **SAFE ENVIRONMENT.** Make sure the playing area, field, arena or floor is safe from hazards that might cause injury.
- **BE SMART.** Do not use alcohol or drugs as these can affect your performance both on and off the field and are significant factors in sport-related injuries.
- Make sure there is proper **SUPERVISION** for the activity in which you are participating.

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1 Sport Medicine Council of Alberta (1999). Heads Up Handbook

2 Sport Medicine Council of Alberta. Basic Care of Athletic Injuries

3 A Sport and Recreation Practitioner's Guide to Building Safe and Healthy Activities. SMCA

4 Injury Prevention Centre. Building a Safer Alberta - Sports and Recreation Injuries (1994)

Concussion is one of the most serious injuries associated with sports as it can lead to lifelong impairment or even death.

You do not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion.

Some signs of a concussion:

- Poor coordination or balance
- Memory loss and confusion
- Vacant stare
- Vision loss and slurred speech
- Unusual behaviours or personality change

To receive additional copies of this Act sheet, contact the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research or check out our website at [www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr](http://www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr)



## COACHES

Have at least a minimum standard of training, learn proper injury prevention and first aid techniques, and teach skills in a progressive level of difficulty. Ensure proper supervision in practice and play, and check the play area for hazards.

## PLAYERS

Be dressed and ready to play by wearing all of your equipment, ensuring it fits properly and it is maintained. Be alert and aware of other players around you and be mentally and physically prepared to play, and play fair.

## PARENTS

Encourage your children to play for enjoyment. Support coaches' and officials' decisions as they are there to make sure that all of the players are safe. Make sure your child's equipment fits, is maintained, and that they wear each piece properly.

## TRAINERS

Educate coaches, parents and players about ways to prevent injuries. Monitor players for signs and symptoms of injury and have appropriate first aid training.

### How to care for an injury

Proper care should be taken with all sport and recreation injuries. If an injury does occur, it is important to treat it properly and quickly:

- Follow the acronym **RICE** for basic care of athletic injuries:<sup>2</sup>

**R**est

**I**ce

**C**ompression

**E**levation

- Follow trainers' and/or doctors' orders for full recovery of an injury.
- Although proper recovery may mean missing some games, returning to play before the injury is properly healed may result in further damage.
- When returning to play, take it easy and increase your playing time gradually and safely.

**REMEMBER** – Playing safely means you always win the game!

### Sport and Recreation Safety in Alberta is a shared responsibility

If you would like more information on this topic, contact:

Sport Medicine Council of Alberta (SMCA)  
phone (780) 415-0812 • [www.connect.ab.ca/smca](http://www.connect.ab.ca/smca)

Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR) provides coordination and support for organizations and professionals in injury control.  
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