

Injury Prevention

Sports injuries can be prevented by considering a wide variety of factors such as the environment of a particular sport, fitness levels, protective equipment and nutrition.

[SPORTS ENVIRONMENT]

- The sports environment includes not only the weather, but also the facilities, surfaces and equipment that are being used.
- Poor, wet or slippery surfaces, lack of goalpost padding or safety netting, obstacles to trip on and sharp objects, can all lead to injury.
- Rules of the game need to be enforced and sometimes modified for children.
- A safe environment will reduce the number of potential injuries

[FITNESS]

- One of the easiest ways to help prevent injury is to stretch. By warming up your muscles, you make them more flexible.
- Adequate fluid intake is important; preferably cool drinks should be taken before, during and after playing sport.
- Correct technique and appropriate training helps improve fitness. For children exercising, monitoring increases in activity to prevent the child from doing “too much, too soon” will help minimise injury.
- Make certain that old injuries are adequately rehabilitated before continuing to participate in a sport.
- Protective equipment such as eyewear, mouthguards, wrist, elbows, knee and shin guards, helmets, tapes and braces all contribute to safety. Make sure shoes are appropriate for the sport.
- “In one recent study of rugby players, mouthguards were the most common protective equipment item worn, (55% by players in schoolgirl’s grade to 73% in Senior A competition). The next most common item was taping of body joints such as the ankle, knee, and hand.” 1

[REFERENCE]

1. Marshall SW, Waller AE, Loomis DP, et al. Use of protective equipment in a cohort of rugby players. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*, 33(12):2131-8, 2001.

