

Northshore School District - Athletics and Health

Play It Safe!

A Guide to Safety and Health for Student Athletes

It's called playing, but sports activities are more than play. Participation in athletics improves physical fitness, coordination and self-discipline, and gives students valuable opportunities to learn teamwork.

Reasons for Concern:

Each year, more than 3.5 million sport-related injuries in children are treated in health care facilities in the U.S.-some are minor, some serious, and still others resulting in lifelong medical problems.

Young athletes are not merely small adults. Their bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments are still growing, which makes them more susceptible to injury. Young athletes of the same age can differ greatly in size and physical maturity. Their brains are continuing to develop as well.

Guidelines for Preventing Sports Injuries and Related Illnesses:

- Get a complete physical examination at the beginning of the season.
- Prevent injuries with proper attire and equipment.
- Prevent injuries by pre-season conditioning that includes muscle strength, endurance, cardiovascular fitness and flexibility.
- Maintain hydration or fluid levels; drink plenty of water, during, and after practice or competition.
- The latest research indicates teens need an average of 9 hours of sleep/night; remember to include time for studying and "down time".
- Practice healthy eating habits and good nutrition.
- The use of anabolic steroids has shown to cause serious and potentially life-threatening complications and should never be used to improve athletic performance. Experts also warn that other "performance-enhancing" products that are caffeine-laden used with exercise can be dangerous.

Measures for Preventing and Controlling Infections:

- a. Wash hands with soap and water frequently or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer routinely.
- b. Encourage immediate showering following sports activities.
- c. Do not share towels, razors or athletic gear.
- d. Wash athletic gear and towels after each use.
- e. Watch for signs/symptoms of skin infections (e.g. redness, swelling, increased pain, fever). Inform your coach, trainer or school nurse.
 - Administer or seek proper first aid for all injuries
 - Care and Containment of all wounds (Very Important): Cover and contain wounds with clean, dry bandages. If wound cannot be covered, students should be excluded from activities that may lead to transmission to others.
 - Contact your health provider for all active skin lesions and lesions that do not respond with 1-2 days of initial therapy.

Stay home and rest if you have a fever, or need to re-habilitate an injury.

Please pay careful attention to these guidelines so you can play successfully with good health and safety practices.