

Spring and Summer Sports Activities and the Resulting injuries

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The cold Winter's grip is finally starting to loosen up. We can now look forward to some Spring and Summer activities, Oh Yeah I'm ready!

As a Pediatrician practicing here in Santa Clara Valley for over 25 years, I've seen my fair share of injuries related to the many sporting activities that are available to us here in this beautiful valley we call home. I'd like to share some thoughts on how we can prevent injuries, as well as treat the injuries we may encounter.



First, let me say I enjoy riding my bike on the many biking trails we have here, such as the Almaden Creek trail and the Los Gatos creek trail. Last year while I was riding I happened onto a dad

with three kids all on bikes. The dad dutifully had all three children in biking protection gear, which included: gloves and helmets. The youngest, also, had knees pads and training wheels. What was missing was dad's protective gear! I'm not concerned that he wasn't wearing gloves, but going without a helmet is just crazy to me. Think about it, we are required by law to have our children wear helmets through the age of 16, and any good parent would want to teach his or her children to wear helmets while riding

ANY wheeled recreation vehicle. So why isn't the father wearing his helmet? Our children learn by our example. Also, what happens to these children if dad falls and hits his head, sustaining a concussion or loss of consciousness? How scary would that be for those children?

Now that I have your attention let's talk about head injuries and concussion. I ask everyone of my patients that has a concussion, "How many concussions is too many?" I believe the answer is one. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are now the leading concern in contact sports. Prevention is the key. Most athletic trainers at most high schools in our area are now doing baseline concussion testing. So when an athlete does receive a concussion, we are able to retest them until they return to or near their neurological baseline.

ANY head injury, whether there was loss of consciousness or not needs to be taken seriously. If the athlete fails an on field assessment for concussion they should be removed from play until they can be cleared by a physician competent in evaluating concussions.

Back to my example parent, Please do what you would have your children do. They look up to you and we need to set the example.

Bumps and booboos, or if you'd like abrasions and lacerations: Abrasions are quite simply the tearing off of the skin, usually on knees and elbows, but they can be any where on the body. Simple abrasions need to be cleanse with a mild warm soapy water and washed off with water. Pat the area dry with a paper or cloth towel. I like to put an antibiotic ointment on like polysporin or neosporin, then cover it with a dressing such as band aides, gauze, or a nonstick dressing. I recently read an article that recommends we keep the wound covered until it has healed. I'd change the dressing several times a day, applying antibiotic ointment and dressing for the first few days then just use band aides until it has healed.



Lacerations can require more than a simple band aide. The general "rule of thumb" is if the wound is gaping open, won't stop bleed, or is deep get medical care for the wound. A simple laceration may only need a snug, well fitted dressing to stop the bleeding and close the wound. When in doubt get help! I like to clean wounds, especially if the are dirty or have been received in such a manner that you are not sure of its cleanliness.

Tumbles, turns, sprains, and fractures OH NO: Probably the most common injuries in competitive sports, affectionately known as weekend warriors, are strains and sprains. Simple sprains of a joint, such as a wrist, ankle or knee can be dealt with, by ice, elevation and pain control. However, some sprains can be pretty bad, requiring medical intervention. Never think, "Oh I just sprained it and it will be OK soon." Damage to ligaments, tendons, and muscle can take a long time to heal and should be treated with respect. Most sprains take weeks to recover and then they still may not be fully functional. Rest is the best medicine, combined with ice, elevation and pain control, and you will be ready to go. I like to see the swelling subside, as well as the bruising before I let my patients return to their sport. Sometimes a brace or ace sleeve is needed to help support the injured joint until full recovery has happened.

Fractures of any kind require urgent medical attention. Trained medical personnel are always your best bet, in this situation. On field immobilization of the injured part is important. Transportation to your doctor or hospital is next, that may require trained professionals! Transportation by private vehicle isn't always a good idea.

Spring and Summer bring us outside into the beautiful days we enjoy here in Santa Clara Valley. Sun exposure has many pitfalls, such as sunburn, heat stroke, dehydration just to name a few. Here, it's all about the basics. Sun block, which should be reapplied every few hours. SPF 30 or above is preferred. Keep the babies in the shade. Drink, drink and drink more water. Water is all we really need to be drinking. Current recommendations are to consume water before consuming these sports or energy drinks, which appear to be of little benefit. Be careful about alcohol consumption on those beautiful Spring and Summer days. Alcohol can make dehydration worse and you may not be aware of how intoxicated you are.



Heat stroke is a more serious form of too much fun in the sun. If your activities are strenuous or physically intense, you may experience heat stroke. Symptoms may include high body temperature, flushing of the skin, decreased urine output, headache, and confused thinking. Get in the shade, cool down, stop your activity, and drink fluids preferably water.

I love our climate here in Santa Clara Valley. We have such a great prolonged warm season, which gets us outside and active. Be happy, have fun, and use common sense when you engage in all of your activities. For more on how to enjoy your activities and sports go to my website: www.kjkidmd.com.