

Coaches: Safety Checklist



Communication

- ❑ Get parents on board early with a meeting before the first practice. Let them know how they can help you keep their kids healthy and safe.



Physicals

- ❑ It's important for each athlete to have a pre-participation physical exam (PPE) from his/her doctor.
- ❑ Ask parents if there is any player with asthma or another medical condition that requires special attention.



Gear

- ❑ Remember to check athletes' equipment to make sure it is in good condition and worn correctly.



Hydration

- ❑ Know the signs and symptoms of dehydration and other forms of heat illness. [Learn more here.](#)
- ❑ Make sure athletes stay well hydrated, drinking plenty of water before, during and after play. Establish water breaks every 15-20 minutes throughout practices and games.



Warm-Up

- ❑ Make sure your athletes warm-up before practice and games. We recommend starting with about 10 minutes of jogging or any light activity. Then stretch all major muscle groups, holding each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Here is a proven [warm-up](#) program that has helped reduce the risk of ACL tears in female athletes.



For more resources on how to keep your young athletes healthy and injury free, check out [Safe Kids Sports Safety Guide](#).

Rest

- ❑ To help avoid overuse injury, rest all players during each practice and game.
- ❑ Kids should have at least one or two days off from sports each week.
- ❑ An "off-season" is important, too. It is recommended that kids get ten consecutive weeks of rest from any one sport every year.
- ❑ Tell players the importance of communicating any pain or injury they may have during practices or games.
- ❑ Learn about sport-specific [overuse injuries here](#).

Concussion

- ❑ Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion. [Check out this helpful link.](#)
- ❑ A player with a suspected concussion must be sidelined until evaluated and released by a medical professional. The important thing is to protect players who have had a concussion from getting harmed again. A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, sit them out.
- ❑ Teach your parents and athletes about concussions so they can also be watching for the signs and symptoms.

Environment

- ❑ Check the weather to be aware of dangerous weather conditions, like a high heat index or lightning.
- ❑ Do a quick scan to make sure the playing surface is safe (no holes or sharp objects) and that goals and nets are safe.

Training

- ❑ Add to your skills with free sports safety training at [Safe Kids Sports Safety Clinics](#).

Emergencies

- ❑ Store parents' contact information in your phone.
- ❑ Have a stocked first aid kit handy at all practices and games.
- ❑ It's also a good idea to get certified in first aid and CPR.