

...a pound of cure

**Sports and recreational activities:
injury prevention is key**

Debbie Friedman
Administrative Director,
Trauma Care & Injury Prevention Program

Enjoying sports and recreational activities contributes to good health and is important for the physical, psychological and social development of children and teens. The increased popularity of team, contact and extreme sports can sometimes lead to injury. Approximately 30% of trauma-related injuries seen at The Children's each year happen while participating in sports and recreational activities. Most of them are preventable. The challenge lies in striking a balance between promoting activity and ensuring safety. It is important to be aware of the risks, follow the safety recommendations for specific sports and activities, and make smart choices. Parents, teachers, and coaches can set a positive example by doing the same. Nobody is invincible: trauma is the leading cause of death and disability in children and teens. The best form of treatment is prevention!

At this time of year, many children and teens are enthusiastically trying out for team and contact sports. For any sport -- football, basketball, rugby, or hockey -- there are fundamental recommendations to keep in mind. Always warm up and stretch before playing, and cool down afterwards. Equipment needs to fit properly and meet approved standards in order to provide maximum protection. Proper skill training is essential to avoid injuries, and should not be underestimated. Players, coaches and parents should always respect the rules and practice good sportsmanship and teamwork. Sports and recreational activities provide a wonderful opportunity for growth, development and organized fun. Make this a positive experience by having zero tolerance for gratuitous violence.

Recognize an injury early and do not try to play through it. Players should be encouraged to report symptoms immediately and accurately. Seeking early medical attention is crucial to ensure the proper steps to a full recovery. It is also essential to avoid both re-injury during the healing phase and the development of a chronic problem.

Approximately 30% of trauma-related injuries seen at The Children's each year happen while participating in sports and recreational activities. Most of them are preventable.

Trauma specialists at The Children's have developed a "Back to Sports" plan that is individualized to the needs of each child or teen. The plan includes sport-specific conditioning, skill work, drills with a teammate, team drills, scrimmages, and returning to full play. Remember that returning to contact and team sports should happen only once symptoms have been completely resolved, healing is complete, and all steps of the "Return to Play" plan have been followed.

If you wish to receive The Montreal Children's Hospital's "Returning to Sports after an Injury" pamphlet, please contact the Foundation's Communications Department at info@fhme.com. ■



Les photos sont une gracieuseté de Samson Chan-Tremblay, un jeune patient qui a aujourd'hui 16 ans. Pictures were kindly provided by 16-year-old patient Samson Chan-Tremblay.