

# Protect the ones you love

## SPORTS INJURIES



### The Reality

We all want to keep our children safe and secure and help them live to their full potential. Knowing how to prevent injuries from sports and recreation activities, one of the leading causes of child injury, is a step toward this goal.

Taking part in sports and recreation activities is an important part of a healthy, physically active lifestyle for kids. But injuries can, and do, occur. More than half of the 7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur each year are sustained by youth between ages 5 and 24.

Thankfully, there are steps that parents can take to help make sure kids stay safe on the field, the court, or wherever they play or participate in sports and recreation activities.

### Prevention Tips

**Gear up.** When children play active sports, make sure they use protective gear, such as helmets, wrist guards and knee and elbow pads—in addition to any other sports gear appropriate to their activity or player position. Further, during informal recreation activities children should also always wear helmets when recommended, especially during activities such as in-line skating and biking.

**Use the right stuff.** Be sure that sports protective equipment is maintained correctly and is in good condition—for example, without missing or broken buckles or compressed or worn padding. Poorly-fitting equipment may be uncomfortable and may not offer proper protection.

**Practice makes perfect.** Have children learn and practice skill sets relevant to their chosen activity. For example, appropriate tackling technique is important in preventing injuries in football and soccer. Correct biomechanics, or movement and alignment, also plays a role in preventing injuries during baseball, softball, and many other activities. Also, be sure to safely and slowly increase activities to improve physical fitness; being in good condition can protect participants from injury.

**Pay attention to temperature.** Allow time for child athletes to gradually adjust to hot or humid environments to prevent heat-related injuries or illness. Parents and coaches should pay close attention to make sure that players are hydrated and appropriately dressed.

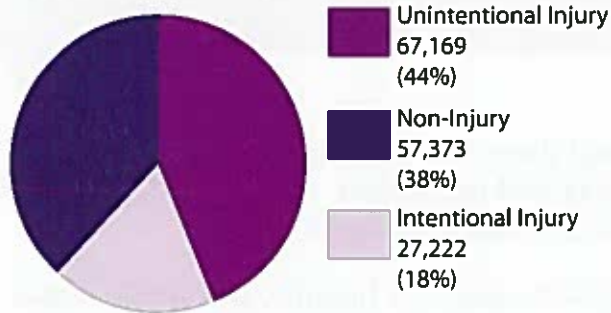
**Be a good model.** Communicate positive messages about safety and serve as role models for safe behavior, including a wearing helmet and following the rules.

Please visit [www.cdc.gov/safechild](http://www.cdc.gov/safechild) for podcasts, tip sheets, and other information on the leading causes of child injury and steps you can take to protect the children you love.

## Child injuries are preventable



## The Burden of Child Injury, Unintentional Injury Deaths Ages 1–19, United States, 2000–2005



- Across the United States, injuries are the leading cause of death among children ages 19 and younger.
- About 33 children die every day because of injuries.
- Each year, nearly 9.2 million children aged 0 to 19 years are seen in emergency departments for injuries, and 12,175 children die as a result of being injured.

In addition to doing all you can to protect a child from suffering a sports injury, follow these steps to prevent other leading causes of injuries:



**Burns**—Fire and scalding water can pose threats to children. To help keep kids safer from burns caused by fire, install and maintain smoke alarms in your home.



**Falls**—Falls can happen at the playground or at home. To protect your child, check playground equipment to make sure it's properly designed and maintained and that there's a safe, soft landing surface below.



**Drownings**—Drownings can happen quickly and quietly, but installing four-sided fences, with self-closing and self-latching gates, around backyard swimming pools can make a life-saving difference by keeping kids away from the water when you're not there to supervise.



**Poisonings**—Everyday household products can be poisonous to children, but you can safeguard your home. Keep medicines and toxic products, such as cleaning solutions, in locked or childproof cabinets.



**Road traffic injuries**—To make injuries less likely when you're on the road with kids, always use seat belts, child safety seats, and booster seats that are appropriate for your child's age and weight.

[www.cdc.gov/safecild](http://www.cdc.gov/safecild)