

# BASKETBALL SAFETY

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR KEEPING KIDS IN THE GAME

Fifteen percent of basketball players ages 5-15 suffer injuries, mostly involving ankle and knee sprains. Sprains occur when one or more ligaments in a joint are stretched beyond their limits. This guide provides information on common basketball injuries requiring treatment.



## KNEE INJURIES

A common injury in basketball is an **anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) sprain or tear**, which occurs when the knee is twisted forcefully or hyperextended. Athletes with a damaged ACL often describe a “pop” at the time of injury, followed by a lot of swelling within a few hours.

Athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if pain and/or swelling persist. In addition:

- In younger athletes, bone maturity helps to determine the treatment plan. Injury to an open growth plate requires special consideration by a pediatric orthopedic specialist.

Core strengthening and training in proper cutting, jumping and landing technique may help to prevent this injury.

Knee pain that comes on slowly over time can indicate other problems, such as:

- **Patello-femoral pain syndrome (Runner's Knee)** – pain in the front of the knee related to muscle and tissue stress around the knee cap; can be addressed with proper training in physical therapy
- **Osteochondritis dissecans** – a defect in the knee's cartilage that can become evident over time during repetitive activity such as jumping
- **Osgood-Schlatter disease** – stress-related inflammation in a growth center at the front of the knee

## ASTHMA

Asthma is a condition that causes wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath or chest tightness.

Some athletes have a form of asthma that causes symptoms during or after physical activity called exercise-induced asthma. Actions that may prevent or lessen exercise-induced asthma are:

- Warming up before a workout or game
- Breathing through the nose, and not the mouth, to warm and humidify the air before it enters the airways

Wheezing or coughing that begins between five to 20 minutes after beginning to run or play is a sign that asthma is not under control and more needs to be done to control symptoms.

## DEHYDRATION

Basketball players are at risk of **dehydration** if they don't get enough fluid to replace what is lost through the skin as sweat and through the lungs while breathing. It is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after a workout or game. Athletes should take a water bottle to school and drink between classes and during breaks so that they are well-hydrated before their workout.

In addition:

- Water should be readily available when working out.
- Athletes should drink often, ideally every 5 to 30 minutes.
- Sports drinks are recommended for activities lasting longer than one hour to replace sugar and salt as well as water.

Early signs of dehydration can be non-specific and include fatigue, nausea, decreased athletic performance, headache, apathy, irritability and thirst. Signs of advanced dehydration include dark urine, decrease in reaction time, dry lips and mouth and disorientation.

## ANKLE INJURIES

**Ankle sprains** occur most in basketball when landing from a rebound or jumping to make a basket. Treatment varies with the severity of the injury:

- Mild sprains require rest but not necessarily medical treatment.
- Injuries with persistent swelling, pain, or any deformity should be seen by a physician.

# BASKETBALL SAFETY (CONT.)

## SPORTS SAFETY

Children ages 5 to 14 make up almost 40 percent of all sports injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Injuries in children are best handled by pediatric specialists trained in treating skeletally immature patients.

**Athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if any of these symptoms are present:**

- Deformity
- Limping that lasts more than 48 hours
- Soft tissue swelling that gets worse the next day despite ice and over-the counter anti-inflammatory medication
- Effusion – mobile soft tissue swelling on both sides of a joint, often easily seen at the knee or ankle
- Pain that returns quickly with activity at the next session or is not gone after two weeks of rest

### How to protect your child:

- Schedule your child for an annual physical before playing sports.
- Monitor play and practice and encourage players to abide by the rules.
- Have a first aid kit handy and an emergency action plan in place.
- Keep sports fun! Remember to be positive and don't push kids to perform beyond their abilities.

### Bumps, Bruises, Twists & Muscle Strains

These can affect all areas of the body.

Recommended treatment is the **PRICE** formula:

**P**rotect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.

**R**est the injured area.

**I**ce the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.

**C**ompress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.

**E**levate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

### Make sure your young athlete:

- Wears appropriate properly-fitting safety gear, free of heavy wear and tear
- Stays properly hydrated. Kids don't sweat as much as adults and need to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after activity
- Does warm-up and cool-down exercises before and after practices and games
- Gets proper rest and avoids overdoing it.

## SSM HEALTH CARDINAL GLENNON SPORTSCARE

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, SSM Health

Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLUCare Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at **314-577-5640** or visit us at [cardinalglennon.com/sportscare](http://cardinalglennon.com/sportscare).

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, **24 hours a day in the ER** at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles..



Web | [cardinalglennon.com/sportscare](http://cardinalglennon.com/sportscare)  
YouTube | [youtube.com/ssmcardinalglennon](https://www.youtube.com/ssmcardinalglennon)  
Facebook | [facebook.com/cardinalglennon](https://www.facebook.com/cardinalglennon)  
Twitter | [twitter.com/cardinalglennon](https://twitter.com/cardinalglennon)

BASKETBALL SAFETY