

# Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign 2020



Week 5 of 16

## Sports and Exercise Safety

*Nobody wants to spend the summer in the emergency room or in a cast. Use these safety tips for your sports activities to reduce the risk of injury.*

### Wearable Protection

The equipment you wear while participating in sports and other activities is key to preventing injuries. Check out these recommendations:

#### **Helmets.**

- Always wear a helmet made for the sport you're playing.
- It should fit snugly but comfortably and shouldn't tilt backward or forward.

#### **Eye Protection.**

- Wear polycarbonate glasses for most activities.
- Polycarbonate facemasks, guards, or shields that attach to a helmet are used for football, softball, and baseball.
- Polycarbonate goggles are best for basketball, racquet sports, and soccer, for example.

#### **Mouth Guards.**

- Wear a mouth guard if you play a contact sport or other sport where head injury is a risk, such as football, basketball, martial arts, boxing, or wrestling.
- They can be fitted by a dentist or purchased at sports stores.

#### **Pads and Guards.**

- Elbow and knee guards can prevent cuts and breaks.
- For contact sports, use the appropriate pads.

#### **Footwear.**

- Choose the right shoe for the sport.
- Replace shoes and cleats that are worn out and no longer support you properly when you move.



### Rules of the Game

- Rules aren't restrictions. They're designed to promote safety so that everyone can enjoy the game. Do yourself a favor and learn the rules—and then follow them.
- Sometimes rules may not be directly related to a sport or activity but need to be followed anyway. For example, riding a bike requires that you pay attention to all traffic laws.
- Proper techniques also promote safety. This goes for any sport. Baseball players know not to spike the opposing player who's covering the bag. And when two tennis players rush the net, an angled volley is the correct shot—not a hard smash socked directly at an opponent's face!

***Don't take chances with head injuries. After a hit; loss of consciousness, amnesia, confusion, headache, or vomiting are some signs of a concussion. However, the injury could be much worse. When in doubt, go to the hospital!***

## Lessons Learned

*Learn from those who have gone before you. Following are samples of mishap narratives from the Naval Safety Center.*

A Sailor was playing volleyball with friends on the sand court behind the barracks. *No, it wasn't Top Gun, but it was an aviation command.* Sailor 1 and Sailor 2 (*We'll call them Maverick and Goose*) were on the same team (*obviously*) and simultaneously jumped to spike the ball. While airborne, Maverick's left leg "shot out to the side," and his foot contacted Goose's leg. Maverick's left middle toe "came in direct contact" with Goose's shin, injuring Maverick's toe. Maverick fell to the sand in pain and was assisted off of the court by the other players (*Iceman and Slider*). Maverick slowly walked back into the barracks and informed the staff (*Viper*) of the injury. X-rays showed that Maverick had fractured his middle toe. — *We don't know who subbed in for our Maverick that day, but regardless, he had 30 days off the court to reflect on his visual scanning techniques (cue "Take my Breath Away" by Berlin).*

Sailor was snorkeling just off the beach. He applied sunscreen (*good job*), but failed to re-apply (*not good*.) What's worse, he went approximately two hours unprotected in direct sunlight (*did we mention this occurred in the south Pacific?*). The next day, our sun snorkeler had blisters all over his back, shoulder, and face. After treatment for second-degree burns, he was assigned sick-in-quarters (SIQ) for three days. — *Sunburn can have long-lasting complications such as premature skin aging, and even skin cancer, just to mention a couple. Besides that second-degree burns hurt! Apply and re-apply sunscreen often. A rash-guard shirt isn't a bad idea either.*

A Sailor was at the beach attempting to skimboard, something he had never tried before (*and here we go!*). On his second attempt at jumping onto the board, his front foot landed on the board and his back foot didn't. Having gotten it half right, most of the Sailor's body kept moving forward while the rest stayed behind with the planted foot. This action broke his leg (fibula) and shattered bones in his ankle. The Sailor set the bone in the leg himself at the beach (*wow!*). His wife drove him to the emergency room (*glad he didn't drive himself*), where X-rays confirmed the breaks. With orthopedic surgery, and several plates and screws later, our skimboard Sailor (*now retired from skimboarding*) was put on 42 days convalescent leave, followed by six weeks on light duty. — *We're repeating old lessons here: Know your limitations, warm up and stretch first, and ease into a new sport.*



A Marine was playing musical chairs with his fellow Marines at the beach during a grill out. Sometime during the game (*perhaps halfway through the second verse of "The wheels on the bus"*), the Marine fell, pinching his fingers between two chairs as he was running to sit. — *The report makes no mention whether the Marine won that round, but with a broken finger and 30 days on light duty, he was probably made the designated DJ for future tournaments.*

## Kids and Sports Injuries

- Participation in sports can teach kids to stretch their limits and learn sportsmanship and discipline. But any sport also carries the potential for injury. By knowing the causes of sports injuries and how to prevent them, you can help make athletics a positive experience for your child.
- Kids, especially those younger than eight, are less coordinated and have slower reaction times than adults. Also, kids mature at different rates, with differences in height and weight between kids of the same age. And when kids of varying sizes play sports together, there can be an increased risk of injury. As kids grow bigger and stronger, the potential for injury increases, largely because of the amount of force involved.
- Also, kids may not judge the risks of certain activities as well as adults would, which can lead to injuries.

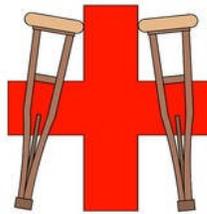


## Preventing Sports Injuries in Kids

- It's important for kids to use proper equipment and safety gear that is the correct size and fits well. They should wear helmets for baseball, softball, bicycle riding, and hockey. They also should wear helmets while they're inline skating or riding scooters and skateboards.
- Ask your child's coach about the appropriate helmets, shoes, mouth guards, athletic cups and supporters, and padding. For racquet sports, field hockey, lacrosse, basketball, softball, and baseball, ask about any protective eyewear, like shatterproof glasses.



## Treating Sports Injuries in Kids



- If an injury appears to affect basic functioning in any way — for example, if your child can't bend a finger, is limping, or has had a change in consciousness — first aid should be given immediately. A doctor should then see your child. If the injury seems to be more serious, it's important to take your child to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- Overuse injuries: If your child complains of pain, it's the body's way of saying there's a problem. Limit activity until your child sees a doctor. The doctor can then determine whether it's safe to return to play or if your child needs to see a sports medicine specialist. It's important to get overuse injuries diagnosed and treated to prevent them from turning into larger, chronic problems.
- Because overuse injuries are characterized by swelling, a doctor may prescribe rest, medicines to ease inflammation, and physical therapy. When recovery is complete, your child's technique or training schedule might need to be adjusted to prevent the injury from flaring up again.



**Questions? Contact the MCAS Iwakuni Station Safety Center.**