

Another school sports season: How to lower your child's odds for injury

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Playing sports can offer a lot of benefits for kids, but it's also important

to help protect them from injuries.

Parents and coaches can make a big difference in helping [kids](#) play safely, according to Nemours Kids Health.

The medical organization suggests starting with proper equipment. Use it, but also make sure the safety gear is the right size, fits well and is right for the sport. That includes helmets for baseball, softball, bike riding and hockey, as well as for 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, Nemours advised. Also ask about [protective eyewear](#) for racquet sports, field hockey, lacrosse, basketball, softball and baseball. This might include shatterproof glasses.

Make sure protective equipment is approved by the organizations that oversee the sports. That means bike helmets with safety certification from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and hockey masks approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), for example.

Take good care of this equipment so it holds up and continues working.

Kids also need safe playing surfaces, including playing fields that are not full of holes and ruts that are a tripping hazard.

High-impact sports, like basketball and running, should be done on surfaces like tracks and wooden basketball courts, which can be more forgiving than concrete.

Adult supervision is important for all kids' team sports or activities.

Choose leagues and teams that have the same commitment to safety and [injury prevention](#) that you do, Nemours advises.

The coach's philosophy should be focused on players' well-being, not on winning at all costs. Be sure the coach is enforcing rules and the use of safety equipment. Work with the coach to make sure your child is a good match for the sport in terms of level, size, and physical and emotional maturity.

Make sure your team's [coach](#) is trained in first-aid and CPR.

Prepare your child to start a new sport by learning the rules of the game and how to stay safe. Teach them to stretch and warm up before practices and games, to lessen the chance of [injury](#). Keep them well-hydrated and send them to practices and games with plenty to drink, Nemours recommends.

Among the injuries kids can experience in [sports](#) are those caused by falling, being hit by a ball or running into another player. These can result in scratches, bruises, an eye injury or a [broken bone](#).

Repetitive stress injuries from overuse can happen with too much repetition. This can cause bone growth problems and often affect the feet, knees, elbows and shoulders. It's possible to re-injure this area when returning to a sport too soon.

Many injuries can be prevented, Nemours said.

More information: Safe Kids Worldwide has more [kids safety tips](#).

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