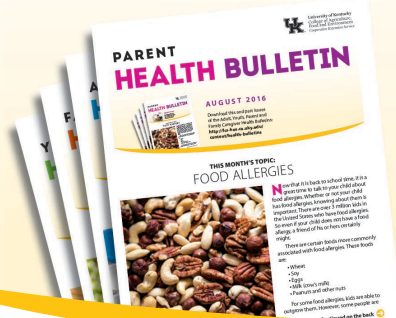


# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



**NOVEMBER 2017**

Download this and past issues of the Adult, Youth, Parent and Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:  
<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: SPORTS SAFETY



**W**ith a new school year, your child may have shown interest in participating in a team sport. Some young athletes are already enjoying fall weather activities and school competitions. Organized sports and activities are important for a child's social and physical development. However, sports also place a child at risk of injuries. These risks can be minimized when young athletes have proper equipment, a safe environment to play in and access to healthcare professionals who know when and how to intervene.

Whether your child plays organized sports like soccer, football or basketball, or participates in cheerleading or marching band, as a parent you can ensure your child has a positive and safe experience.

### When should my child play team sports?

Children are generally ready to participate in organized sports by 6 years of age. Most children are ready to play contact sports by 8 years of age.

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# *Make sure your child wants to participate. Do not push children into something they do not want to do.*

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Consider your child's age, weight and size as well as his or her emotional development.

### Prepare your child

- Make sure your child wants to participate. Do not push children into something they do not want to do.
- Take your child to a physician for a pre-participation physical exam to determine their readiness to play before the start of the season.
- Fill out a medical authorization form with your contact information, and for precaution, permission for emergency medical care.
- Encourage your child to tell you if they get hurt or have symptoms of an injury from practice/event.
- It is vital as a parent to maintain open communication with your child's coach or instructor.

### Guarantee correct equipment

- Make sure your child has and uses whatever protective equipment is recommended for the sport.
- Discourage your child from sharing towels, athletic gear and water bottles.
- Ensure that child's clothing, equipment, including bags, is laundered or disinfected on a regular basis.
- Make sure your child stays hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise or play.

### Know the risks of overuse

The current emphasis on developing a specialty skill in just one or two sports can result in overuse injuries in children. Young pitchers are especially at risk of repetitive or chronic injury.

According to the Alliance for Youth Sports, for children up to age 8, these should be held for no more than one hour, three days a week; for those age 9 to 12, a maximum of one and a half hours, four days a week; and for those 13 and older, not more than two hours, four days a week.



Make sure your child has "off" days. This recovery day will allow time for the body to rest and rejuvenate.

### Be a supportive parent

- Encourage your child to do their best, emphasizing the importance of playing fair and having fun, not winning.
- Based on psychological research, the six healthiest statements you can make to your child before and after completion:
  - "Have fun!"
  - "Play hard!"
  - "I love you!"
  - "Did you have fun?"
  - "I'm proud of you!"
  - "I love to watch you play!"

Competitive sports can be a lot of fun for your child. However, before enrolling, talk to your child and make sure he or she is ready to play.

#### RESOURCES:

- National Alliance for Youth Sports  
<http://www.nays.org>
- Youth Sports Safety Alliance  
<http://www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org>
- National Athletic Trainers' Association  
<https://www.nata.org/press-release/051513/keep-youth-sports-safety-top-mind-guidelines-national-athletic-trainers%E2%80%99>
- [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury\\_prevention/children/fact\\_sheets/6-19\\_years/team\\_sports\\_safety\\_6-19\\_years.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/children/fact_sheets/6-19_years/team_sports_safety_6-19_years.htm)

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