



# YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN



## NOVEMBER 2017

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<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

### THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# STARTING SPORTS

**E**ver thought of joining a sports team? But why do people play sports? Some people say “to get exercise,” which is correct. Others say “to have fun.” That is also true. Sports are a great way to have fun and stay active. You have lots of choices about what to play! You can even compete with your school’s sports or just play them for fun with friends.

### Reasons to start playing sports

- **Do better in school.** Research shows that kids who are active have better learning skills, memory and concentration, which can give them a better advantage in the classroom.
- **Learn teamwork.** Sports teach valuable life skills of teamwork, cooperation, leadership and goal setting. Working with coaches and teammates to win games and achieve the same goal helps you become a successful person.



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- **Sports are good for you.** Benefits of playing sports include maintaining a healthy weight, having strong bones and muscles, and learning a healthy lifestyle. Youth who play sports are also less likely to smoke in the future.
- **Playing sports boosts self-confidence.** Youth who play sports feel better about themselves. Why? Sports build confidence. As you practice, improve and achieve your goals, you will figure out that you can do anything when you set your mind to it. Sports are also a feel-good activity because they help you get to play and make new friends.
- **Exercise reduces stress.** Playing sports can lessen stress and help you feel a little happier. How? The brain chemicals released during exercise improve a person's mood. Being more active helps you relax and, therefore, helps you sleep better.

## What you should know before playing sports

Playing sports is a lot of fun. However, before your sports season starts, here are some tips to get you started:



- **See your doctor.** Everyone needs to be cleared at the beginning of the season to play. This is just to make sure you are healthy and ready for action.
- **Wear protective gear, such as helmets, protective pads and other gear.** Ask your coach what you need if you are new to the sport. If you are a returning player, make sure all of your equipment still fits and works.



- **Know the rules of the game.** Knowing the rules of the game — what's legal and what's not — will help you stay safe and play better. Listening to your coach during a game also can help keep you safe.
- **Don't play when you're injured.** It can be tempting to get right back into the game, even after an injury. But playing when you are hurt — or before an injury has healed — is a bad idea. It can lead to an even worse injury, which can have you sitting out all season. Make sure to be honest with parents and coaches if you are hurt.
- **Have fun!** Figure out what sports you like best. Not everyone loves baseball or soccer. Maybe your passion is karate, or kickball, or dancing. Just make sure whatever you pick, you pick because you want to play it!

### RESOURCES:

- <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/5-sports.html>
- <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/sport-safety.html>

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