



SMARTPLAY

GEAR UP

Gear Up Your guide to protective equipment

Don't put your body on the line for sport when protective equipment can save you from injury.

The facts

- Protective equipment should be worn at all times (training and games).
- It should fit correctly.
- It is important to regularly check and maintain protective equipment.
- Try out equipment prior to using it in competition or training.
- Equipment should be specific and appropriate for the sport, size, and age of the athlete.
- Equipment should always be used according to the manufacturer's guidelines and the recommendations of the sporting body concerned.
- Remember injuries usually mean time on the sideline - prevention is the key.

Examples of protective equipment:

Wrist, elbow and knee guards

- Protective wrist guards are useful to protect from impact when falling onto an outstretched hand.
- Padded knee protectors absorb impact forces from falls onto concrete and skating surfaces, and collisions with racing poles.
- Elbows are at risk when falling and padding will reduce grazing and protect the joint from impact.

Shin pads

- Shin injuries are common in sports where there is a fast moving object e.g. hockey, softball, cricket, lacrosse.
- Properly fitting shin pads will prevent a large number of these injuries.
- Ensure that the shin pads are appropriate for the sport i.e. different shin pads for hockey and soccer.

Shoulder padding and body protectors

- In tackling sports such as rugby league and union, shoulder protectors are recommended to protect the top of the shoulder joint from impact injury.
- Padded body protectors help to protect the trunk, particularly the chest area, from impact injury in sports such as fencing or softball and baseball (catcher and referee).
- "Boxes" for boys in sports such as cricket and hockey are essential to protect the genitals.

Helmets

- In sports where high-speed collisions are likely (e.g. motorcycling, cycling) hard-shell helmets are of proven value.
- In sports that have the potential for missile injuries (e.g. baseball, lacrosse) or for falls onto hard surfaces (e.g. gridiron, ice-hockey) specific helmets can reduce head injuries.
- Helmets should be approved by the sporting association concerned.

Ankle taping and braces

- Ankle taping and braces can protect the ankle from injury when an athlete lands awkwardly.
- They can be used to protect a previously injured ankle when a player returns to sport.
- Ankle braces and tape can be purchased from your local pharmacy or sports store.
- For advice about what type of braces to buy and how to tape effectively, contact your local sports physiotherapist, sports doctor or sports trainer.

Gloves

- Protective gloves help to prevent bruising and fractures of the fingers, thumbs and hand in sports such as cricket, baseball and softball.
- Gloves can also protect the hands from blisters in equestrian sports.

Mouthguards

- If participants are involved in sports where they are at risk of a blow to the head or face from either opponents or equipment, they should wear a properly fitted mouthguard.
- A mouthguard correctly fitted by a dentist will protect teeth, stop biting into the lips and act as a cushioned layer between teeth to reduce the risk of concussion and jaw fracture.

Mouthguards should ...

- Fit the mouth accurately.
- Allow normal breathing and speech.
- Be custom designed and fitted by a qualified professional.

Footwear

- Footwear that fits correctly and is designed for the specific sport or activity is essential to prevent many injuries. Important features of correct footwear include:

Fit, cushioning and stability

- See a sports podiatrist for more advice on specific foot problems and the correct footwear for you.



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