

If an injury occurs

- ▶ Certificated first aid personnel should be in attendance at all games and practice sessions.
- ▶ All hockey clubs should have a well-stocked first aid kit, a telephone and emergency contact phone numbers on display.
- ▶ Players and coaches should ensure that injuries are completely rehabilitated before resuming play.
- ▶ Players with a history of recurring joint injury (eg. ankle) should seek professional advice about preventive bracing of the joint.

References

Sherker S, Cassell E. A review of field hockey injuries and countermeasures for prevention. Monash University Accident Research Centre. Report No 143. November 1998

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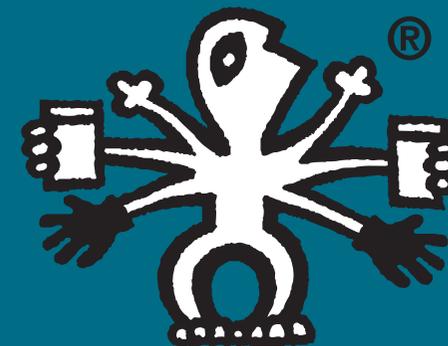
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ACCIDENT RESEARCH CENTRE



SPORT AND
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PREVENTING HOCKEY INJURIES

Preventing Hockey Injuries

Hockey is played in 132 countries and is the second most popular team sport after soccer. Men's and women's competitions are played at the Olympic Games and at the Field Hockey World Cup, both of which are played every 4 years. It is estimated that 15% of hockey players are injured during a single season, and that injuries cause players to spend 11% of the total hockey season training and playing at less than full capacity.

Who plays?

More than 48,000 players are registered with the Australian Hockey Association and approximately 31,000 are registered with Women's Hockey Australia. These numbers do not include recreational players and participants in school teams and mixed competitions.

Who is injured?

- ▶ Victorian hospital surveillance data indicates that there were 292 hospital emergency department presentations for hockey injury in the two-year period January 1996 to December 1997. Injured players also seek treatment from GPs, sports medicine clinics, physiotherapists and other health practitioners.
- ▶ Players aged 10 to 19 years accounted for 50% of hospital presentations, mostly in the 15-19 year age group. Of all presentations, 5% are admitted to hospital for further treatment.

Types of injuries

- ▶ Most serious hockey injuries result from being struck by the stick or the ball.
- ▶ The most common injuries presenting to hospitals are open wounds, fractures, sprains and strains and bruising and lacerations.

- ▶ Injuries presenting to hospital are predominantly to the upper limb (mostly injuries to the hand and forearm), face (mostly struck by stick or ball) and lower limb (mostly ankle, foot and knee injuries).
- ▶ Injuries to the head and eyes are infrequent, but tend to be comparatively severe, with a higher than average rate of admission to hospital.
- ▶ Dental injuries are also infrequent, although the damage may be severe and is mostly irreversible.
- ▶ Overuse injuries to the ankles and lower back are also commonly reported.

Safety tips for hockey players

The following tips apply to all players, irrespective of the level at which they play.

Good preparation is important

- ▶ Players should undergo simple fitness testing prior to participation to ensure their readiness to play.
- ▶ Players should routinely warm-up and cool down, including adequate stretching before and after play.
- ▶ Particular attention should be given to thoroughly warming-up and stretching the ankles, hips and lower back.

Wear appropriate safety equipment

- ▶ Goalkeepers should wear a helmet and face guard during training and competition.
- ▶ All players should wear shock absorbent shinguards during training, informal play and competition.
- ▶ All players should wear properly fitted mouthguards to prevent dental injury.

- ▶ Research should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of protective eyewear and gloves in preventing eye and hand injuries in hockey players.

Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- ▶ Accredited coaches must be available to advise and monitor skill development of players at all levels of play.
- ▶ Coaches and players should pay attention to good player nutrition and adequate hydration.
- ▶ Coaches should incorporate training focused on improving ball handling skills and safe use of the hockey stick.
- ▶ Referees and officials should control and consistently penalise dangerous play.

Environmental measures to prevent injury

- ▶ Clubs should develop a risk management plan.
- ▶ Officials should regularly check and maintain hockey pitches to eliminate potential hazards.
- ▶ Players should choose footwear carefully, preferably with professional advice.
- ▶ Players and officials should always apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen.
- ▶ Games should not be played under extreme weather conditions, such as during extreme heat and when lightning storms are indicated.

Modify rules for children

Children should be encouraged to play Minkey (played on a field one-quarter the size of a regular hockey field, with six players to a side) and Half Field hockey (played on half the field, with seven players) as a means of developing basic skills before progressing to more competitive levels of play.