



940 London Ave
Suite 1100
Marysville, Ohio 43040

Administration
Environmental Health
Health Education
(937) 642-2053
Fax: (937) 645-3047

Help Me Grow
Nursing
(937) 642-2053
Fax: (937) 642-9725

Toll Free
1-888-333-9461

WEB Address
www.uchd.net

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Our mission is to protect the health, safety and well-being of all Union County by providing quality public health services.

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Press Release

Contact: Shawna Sue Jordan, Assistant Public Information Officer
Phone: (937) 645-2032
Fax: (937) 645-3047
Email: shawna.jordan@health.co.union.oh.us

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For Immediate Release

April is Youth Sports Safety Month *Keep Kids on the Field and Out of the Operating Room*

More than five million kids under the age of 18 suffer a sports related injury each year with approximately half of these due to overuse, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). To bring attention to this, April has been designated Youth Sports Safety Month.

According to the CDC, participation in organized sports is on the rise. Nearly 30 million children and adolescents participate in youth sports in the United States. This increase in play has led to some other startling statistics about injuries among America's young athletes:

- High school athletes account for an estimated 2 million injuries and 500,000 doctor visits and 30,000 hospitalizations each year.
- Children ages 5 to 14 account for nearly 40 percent of all sports-related injuries treated in hospitals. On average the rate and severity of injury increases with a child's age.
- Overuse injuries are responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high school students.
- Although 62 percent of organized sports-related injuries occur during practice, one-third of parents do not have their children take the same safety precautions at practice that they would during a game.
- Injuries associated with participation in sports and recreational activities account for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children in the United States.
- Since 2000 there has been a fivefold increase in the number of serious shoulder and elbow injuries among youth baseball and softball players.
- According to the CDC, more than half of all sports injuries in children are preventable.

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Though the statistics on youth sport injury are startling, there are things that you can do to better protect and prepare your youth athlete. Follow these tips from the National Center for Sports Safety:

- Make certain that your child's coach is certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If not, a health committee of parents, trained in first aid and CPR, should be organized to provide basic coverage at practices and games.
- An emergency plan, detailing how to respond to injuries until professional help arrives, should be developed and communicated to all parents.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit should be accessible for all practices and games. The kit should include up-to-date medical histories of each player and parents' contact information.
- One way to prevent heat illness in athletes is proper hydration. Water is an adequate beverage for exercise that lasts less than 45-50 minutes. Otherwise, a sports drink should be provided.

For more information, contact the Union County Health Department at 937-642-2053, or email the Sports Injury Prevention Program Coordinator Elizabeth Fries at elizabeth.fries@health.co.union.oh.us.

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