

# Common Soccer Injuries



## Lower Extremity Injuries

- Acute – sprains and strains (Knees and Ankles); ACL, cartilage tears, fractures, contusions
- Overuse – shin splints, patellar tendinitis, Achilles tendinitis, stress fractures

## Upper Extremity Injuries

- Fall on arm, player-player contact – wrist sprains, fractures, shoulder dislocations

## Head, Neck and Face Injuries

- Cuts, bruises, fractures, neck sprains, concussions

## Concussion

- ANY alteration in an athlete's mental state due to head trauma; DO NOT have to lose consciousness to have a concussion. Should STOP playing immediately

## Treating soccer injuries

- Participation should be stopped immediately until injury is evaluated and treated
- Most injuries are minor – treated by short period of rest, ice and elevation
- Return to play only when clearance is granted by a health care professional

## Prevention strategies for soccer injuries

- Have a pre-season physical exam and follow doctor's recommendations
- Use appropriate equipment, such as well-fitting cleats, shin guards
  - Some evidence that molded, multi-studded safer than screw-in cleats

- Be aware of field conditions
- Use properly sized synthetic balls, i.e. leather balls that can become waterlogged and heavy more dangerous especially when heading
- Watch out for mobile goals that can fall and injure players
- Hydrate adequately – waiting until you are thirsty is often too late to hydrate properly
  - Pay attention to environmental recommendations, i.e. hot and humid weather
  - Artificial turf tends to be hotter than natural grass
- Warm up and stretch – Always take time to do, especially your hips, knees, thighs and calves. Research studies show cold muscles more prone to injury
  - Warm up with jumping jacks, stationary cycling, running or walking for 3-5 min
  - Slowly and gently stretch, holding each stretch for 30 seconds
- Cool down and stretch – help reduce muscle soreness and risk for injury
- Maintain proper fitness – injuries rates higher in athletes who have not prepared
  - After a period of inactivity, progress gradually back via aerobic conditioning, strength and agility training
  - During off-season, stick to balanced fitness program incorporating aerobic exercise, strength training and flexibility
- Avoid overuse injuries
  - Many sports medicine professionals believe it to be beneficial to take at least one season off each year
  - Listen to your body – cut back if pain or discomfort develops
- Speak with a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer if you have any concerns about injuries or soccer injury prevention strategies