

Getting Your Child Ready for Spring Sports

Autumn is on its way and schools are preparing to kick off their fall sports programs. If your child is gearing up to join a team, it's important to do some advance preparation to ensure their safety throughout the season.

As the team physician for Taunton High School and Coyle Cassidy High School in Taunton, Morton Hospital Orthopedic Surgeon and Sports Medicine Specialist Dr. Drew Rogers says first and foremost, parents should be informed.

“Preparation is key for any sport,” says Dr. Rogers. “It’s important for parents and their athletes to know the rules and protective equipment required for each sport – and ensure protective equipment is in good condition and fits properly. In addition, coaches should be made aware of any injuries your child has or is concerned about in order to keep your child safe and healthy, and to avoid further injury.”

Dr. Rogers recommends parents consider doing the following before their child starts participating:

1. Talk to the coach about potential dangers associated with your child’s sport, as well as how to prevent them.
2. Find out in advance what the coach's emergency first-aid plan is if a child is injured.
3. Check out the playing fields: Are they free from potholes, glass or other hazardous debris? Are goal posts padded?
4. Find out what will be expected of your child physically, and make sure he or she is up to the challenge before practice begins.

“It's a good idea to take your child to the pediatrician for a physical first so you'll know whether your son or daughter is up for the demands of his or her chosen sport,” said Dr. Rogers. “Many schools will require a sports physical before students can join the team.”

Visiting with a pediatrician will also allow the opportunity for you to discuss any health conditions your child may have, such as asthma or cardiovascular conditions, to determine whether or not it is safe for him or her to participate. In addition, all athletes – especially those who are overweight – are at risk for heat stress in hot, humid weather. Know the signs of heat stress and ensure your child drinks plenty of fluids while playing their sport.

If your child does require medical attention for an injury or other sports-related condition, Morton Hospital’s Emergency Department offers round the clock care, including 24-hour on-call orthopedic coverage, as well as express care for more minor injuries.

Learn more at www.mortonhospital.org, or to make an appointment with a sports medicine physician, call Steward DoctorFinder at 800-488-5959.