The appeal of ice hockey’s fast paced and hard-hitting style has led to its increasing popularity as a youth sport. The characteristics that make ice hockey appealing also put players at risk for injuries. This reference guide provides information on the most common ice hockey injuries.

KNEE INJURIES
A common injury in ice hockey is an *medical collateral ligament (MCL) sprain or tear*, which occurs when the knee is twisted forcefully forced inward during a collision. Athletes with a damaged MCL often experience pain, which can be followed by a lot of swelling within 24 hours.

Athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if pain and/or swelling persist. In addition:

- In younger athletes, bone maturity helps to determine the treatment plan. Injury to an open growth plate requires special consideration by a pediatric orthopedic specialist.
- Core strengthening and training in proper cutting, jumping and landing technique may help to prevent this injury.

Knee pain that comes on slowly over time can indicate other problems, such as:

- **Patello-femoral pain syndrome (Runner’s Knee)** – pain in the front of the knee related to muscle and tissue stress around the knee cap. This can be addressed with proper training in physical therapy
- **Osteochondritis dissecans** – a defect in the knee’s cartilage that can become evident over time during repetitive activity
- **Osgood-schlatter disease** – stress-related inflammation in a growth center at the front of the knee

SHOULDER INJURIES
Shoulder injuries are common injuries in ice hockey. They most often are caused by the collision that is forced when one player drives another into the boards or ice. Seek immediate medical care when the collar bone appears deformed or if the athlete indicates the shoulder is “out of socket.”

HEAD INJURIES
A **concussion** is a brain injury usually caused by a sudden jolt or a blow to the head or neck that disrupts normal brain function. An athlete does not need to be knocked out or have memory loss to have suffered a concussion.

You may observe that an athlete with a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Forgets plays
- Has behavior or personality changes
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Can’t recall events either before or after hit
- Loses consciousness

An athlete with a concussion may have:

- Headaches
- Concentration or memory problems
- Nausea
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feelings of being “in a fog”
- Sensitivity to light or noise

BURNERS OR STINGERS
Also known as **brachial plexus injuries**, stingers are caused by stretching the head away from the arm. Symptoms include: numbness and/or tingling down arm, burning, decreased strength, stinging and changes in sensation. These symptoms may be obvious or subtle, lasting a few seconds or a few minutes, and can last much longer in some cases. Do not allow the child to return to play until his strength and function on the injured side matches that of the non-injured side. If raising the arm over the head or moving the elbow causes pain or limited motion, force him to rest. If the symptoms persist, take your child to his doctor or a pediatric sports medicine physician.
ICE HOCKEY SAFETY (CONT.)

SPORTS SAFETY

Children ages 5 to 14 make up almost 40 percent of all sports injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Injuries in children are best handled by pediatric specialists trained in treating skeletally immature patients.

Athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if any of these symptoms are present:

- Deformity
- Limping that lasts more than 48 hours
- Soft tissue swelling that gets worse the next day despite ice and over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication.
- Effusion – mobile soft tissue swelling on both sides of a joint, often easily seen at the knee or ankle
- Pain that returns quickly with activity at the next session or is not gone after two weeks of rest.

Bumps, Bruises, Twists & Muscle Strains

These can affect all areas of the body. Recommended treatment is the PRICE formula:

- Protect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.
- Rest the injured area.
- Ice the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.
- Compress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.
- Elevate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

How to protect your child:

- Schedule your child for an annual physical before playing sports.
- Monitor play and practice and encourage players to abide by the rules.
- Have a first aid kit handy and an emergency action plan in place.
- Keep sports fun! Remember to be positive and don’t push kids to perform beyond their abilities.

Make sure your young athlete:

- Wears appropriate properly-fitting safety gear, free of heavy wear and tear
- Stays properly hydrated. Kids don’t sweat as much as adults and need to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after activity.
- Does warm-up and cool-down exercises before and after practices and games
- Gets proper rest and avoids overdoing it.

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital, SSM Health Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLUCare Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at 314-577-5640 or visit us at cardinalglennon.com/sportscare.

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, 24 hours a day in the ER at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles.