

# First aid advice for soccer coaches

When you accept the role of coach, you accept a major responsibility for the care and safety of your players. Although your children must share in the responsibility for their protection and safety, their ability to understand what they can do, how they can do it, and whether they are doing it correctly, may be limited. It is your job to help them practice and play as safely as possible.

The information below is not meant as a substitute for a first aid course. If you don't already have first aid certification, I encourage you to enroll in both CPR and first aid classes so that you can handle any accidents that may happen while you are coaching.

Your job as a volunteer coach is to recognize an injury when it happens, to stabilize the injury as best you can, and to summon medical assistance if necessary. *You must understand the limitations of your training and knowledge.* If you are not a trained medical professional:

**Play it safe. Call the emergency services if you are not sure what to do.**

## Have a plan

It is important to have a well thought out plan for dealing with injuries and a written response plan for emergencies. Keep this in your coaching bag where you can pull it out and refer to it if necessary. Some points to consider in your plan are:

- Is a first aid kit available?
- Do I have all of my players' medical consent forms and emergency contacts with me at all times?
- Where is the nearest phone
- How do I get first aid and/or paramedics/ambulance?
- Do any of my assistant coaches or parent volunteers know first aid?
- Who will go for help if I need to attend to an injured player?
- Who will supervise other players if I need to summon help?
- Do my assistant coaches and players know the emergency plan?

## Injury Prevention

An ounce of prevention *is* worth a pound of cure. Prevent injuries in every way possible. Some important steps that can help you in your injury prevention plan include the following:

- Emphasise proper skill development,
- Inspect practice and game fields (e.g. look for holes, sprinkler heads, etc.).

Hopefully you won't have many injuries (kids are amazing resilient!) but if you do you should know how to recognise and treat common soccer injuries.