

SPORTS MEDICINE UPDATE Vol. 1 Ed. 4

HOCKEY SEASON IS HERE!

The chill in the air and skidding of skates can mean only one thing in Northeastern Pennsylvania: it's hockey season! The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins are poised to make another run at the coveted Calder Cup championship, and countless other hockey enthusiasts are "lacing 'em up" for numerous recreational leagues as participation in ice hockey for both men and women continues to increase. As the official sports medicine provider of the Penguins, Geisinger is prepared for all the bumps and bruises associated with hockey, but it's worth looking at some of the injuries that may occur to help prevent them altogether.

The majority of ice hockey injuries are minor, such as soft tissue contusions, strains, ligament sprains, and lacerations. There are also possibilities for serious injuries to occur – including concussions, cervical spine damage, neck lacerations, and eye and airway trauma.

Preventing ice hockey injuries starts before you lace up your skates. All players should have a pre-participation examination by their physician to rule out any pre-existing problems. Also, knowing the rules of the game is very important, especially for children. This will help them and others avoid injuries. Make sure all players are fully equipped and everything fits properly. All equipment should be certified by the HECC (Hockey Equipment Certification Council).

Ice hockey is a game that requires strength and endurance. A good off-ice conditioning program that focuses on flexibility, strength and endurance training is important. Players who are considered out of shape are at a higher rate for injury. The rate of injury increases in the later periods of games and practice do to muscle fatigue.

Regardless of your physical conditioning, all players should warm up properly to prepare the body for practice or a game. This can be accomplished off the ice by riding a stationary bike, doing quick feet drills on a ladder or any calisthenics that will increase your heart rate.

Once you get on the ice, the first thing you should do is skate around at a comfortable pace for about five minutes. Skating in both directions and backwards is beneficial. After you are warmed up on the ice, take some time to stretch. Start with trunk rotations and lateral bending. Then move to stretching your hip flexors, hamstrings and groin muscles.

When the practice or game begins, play within the rules and encourage safe play. Body checking should be limited and is prohibited in some youth leagues. Checking from behind is against the rules, very dangerous and associated with a high rate of injury. Keeping your head up is one of the best ways to prevent injuries.

Remember ice hockey is a great game. Play within the rules and play for fun. Most of all play safe!

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins and Geisinger staff athletic trainer Patrick Steidle, ATC, contributed to this article. For more information about Patrick and the rest of the Geisinger athletic training team, please visit our website

www.geisingersportsmed.com.



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TRAINING TIPS

Don't Let Poor Hygiene Sideline You or Your Teammates!

Avoid infections with these easy steps:

DO shower thoroughly with hot water and soap after every practice/game!

DO change your practice gear every day!

DO clean protective gear (shoulder pads/shin guards) every week!

DO NOT share personal items like razors, towels or water bottles!

DO report all open wounds to your certified athletic trainer!

WINTER SPORT WOES

As our scholastic athletes from across the region begin their winter sports seasons, we'd like to highlight a common but easily misunderstood ailment: shin splints. Many athletes get shin splints – or tibial stress syndrome – at one time or another. Whether you jog daily or just had to sprint to catch a bus one day, you can recognize shin splints by throbbing and aching in your shins.

Shin splints aren't really a single medical condition. Instead, they're just a symptom of an underlying problem. They're commonly caused by irritated and swollen muscles, often the result of overuse.

Athletes who switch from an outdoor sport such as football or soccer to an indoor sport such as basketball or wrestling frequently suffer shin splints. This is due to the change in surface; that is, going from running on soft ground outdoors to hard court or floor indoors. This changes the biomechanics of the foot which can stress the muscles of the lower leg. Depending on the exact cause, the pain may be located along either side of the shinbone (tibia) or in the muscles. The area may be painful to the touch. Swollen muscles can sometimes irritate the nerves in the feet, causing them to feel weak or numb.

Although shin splints may be caused by different problems, treatment is usually the same: Rest your body so the underlying issue heals. Here are some other things to try:

- **Icing the shin** to reduce pain and swelling. Do it for 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours for 2-3 days, or until the pain is gone.
- **Anti-inflammatory painkillers.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) like ibuprofen or naproxen will help with pain and swelling.
- **Arch supports for your shoes.** These orthotics – which can be custom-made or bought off the shelf – may help with flat feet.
- **Range of motion exercises,** if your doctor or athletic trainer recommends them.
- **Physical therapy** to strengthen the muscles in your shins.

For more information on shin splints and other common sports injuries, visit our website www.geisingersportsmed.com

CLINICIANS CORNER

DR. KRYWICKI NAMED SOCIETY PRESIDENT

William Krywicki, M.D., FAAOS, of Shavertown, a Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center orthopedic surgeon, was recently elected president of the Hughston Orthopaedic Society.

Trained in the Hughston style of medicine, Dr. Krywicki serves as Chief of Orthopaedics and Director of Sports Medicine at Geisinger Wyoming Valley.

Dr. Krywicki completed fellowship training in sports medicine at the Hughston Clinic in 1983.

Did you know...

...that Geisinger employs 34 Certified Athletic Trainers?

...that Geisinger Sports Medicine has contracts with 24 high schools, 7 universities, and 3 semi-professional sports teams?

...that Geisinger Sports Medicine has hotlines both in Wilkes-Barre and in Danville that you can call to schedule an appointment?

GEISINGER SPORTS MEDICINE HOTLINES:

Danville:

1-866-414-4988

Wyoming Valley:

1- 800-921-1467

Geisinger Sports Medicine will offer you an appointment within 24 hours of your call.

Check us out on the web at www.geisingersportsmed.com

Geisinger Sports Medicine partners:

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 Penn State Hazleton
 Susquehanna University
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 Central Columbia High School
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 Columbia Montour Vo-Tech
 Dallas Area High School
 Danville Area High School
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