



Keeping Sports Safe Is A Win-Win

(NAPSA)—Playing sports can be a winning way for kids to get healthy exercise and wholesome fun. The safest way to score this worthy goal, however, may be to first learn how to prevent sports-related injuries.

Musculoskeletal sports injuries can range from a sprain or strain to a fracture or dislocation. Some injuries are from accidents, and others can result from poor training practices or improper gear.

Young athletes can reduce the chance of muscle strain or other injury during sports by making warm-ups, such as stretching and light jogging, and cooldowns part of their routine before and after participating in sports.

The following tips from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), National Institutes of Health, can help keep sports safe for kids and prevent injuries.

Whatever sport your youngster plays, he or she should always:

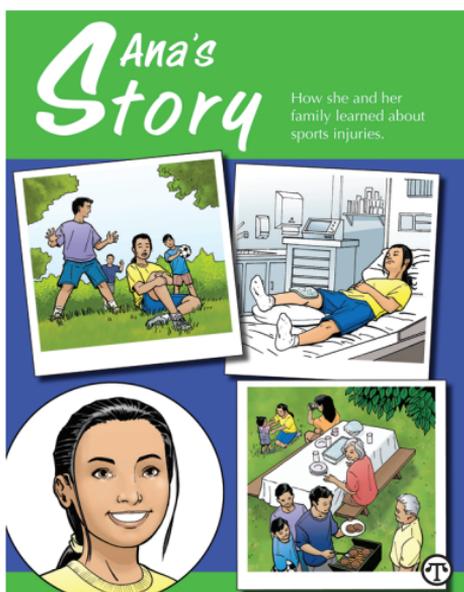
- Warm up before playing
- Drink plenty of fluids while playing
- Rest when tired.

If your child does get injured while playing sports, it's important to treat the injury promptly to prevent further complications. Treat a sports injury right away with:

Rest: Reduce or stop using the injured area for at least 48 hours. For a leg injury, your athlete may need to stay off of it completely.

Ice: Put an ice pack on the injured area for 20 minutes at a time, four to eight times per day. Use a cold pack, ice bag or a plastic bag filled with crushed ice that has been wrapped in a towel.

Compression: Ask your child's doctor about elastic wraps, air



A free, colorful pamphlet helps kids learn to avoid sports injuries.

casts, special boots or splints that can be used to compress an injured ankle, knee or wrist to reduce swelling.

Elevation: Keep the injured area elevated above the level of the heart to help decrease swelling. Use a pillow to help elevate an injured limb.

Get professional treatment if any injury is severe.

An illustrated, bilingual (English/Spanish), comic-book style "fotonovela" teaches middle school kids how to avoid sports injuries. It features teen soccer player Ana, who sprains her knee during a pickup game at a family picnic. Ana and her family learn the best way to treat a sports injury and how to avoid any future injuries. This family-focused publication is a must-read for active kids, parents and coaches.

To get a free copy of this bilingual publication, call toll free (877) 22-NIAMS (226-4267) or order online at www.niams.nih.gov.