

## First Aid for Common Sports Injuries

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While on-field medical emergencies don't happen every day, it's good to be prepared when they do, regardless of the season. That's why sports medicine experts from Minnesota Sports Medicine created the *First Aid Guide for Athletes: A consumer guide to treating common sports injuries*. From muscle strains and asthma to shock and fractures, the guide offers user-friendly information to help care for athletes when qualified medical professionals are unable to assist in a medical emergency. The following recommendations are excerpted from the guide.

### **Abrasions and Lacerations**

Basic skin wounds are among the most common athletic injuries. Ranging from mild to severe, one factor remains: treat immediately. Abrasions, sometimes called *strawberries*, occur when the top layer of skin is scraped away and the blood capillaries exposed. Lacerations are usually deeper and more severe. They are of particular concern when they occur in the mouth or on the scalp. First aid treatment includes careful wound cleaning, beginning in the middle and wiping toward the outside edges. Use a sterile, non-stick pad to dress the wound, changing it daily to keep it clean. Avoid using hydrogen peroxide because it may hinder healing.

### **Dizziness**

Dizziness is not an ailment or injury; rather, it is usually a symptom of another problem. Minor or severe, dizziness should be addressed immediately. Possible conditions related to dizziness include hunger, dehydration, sleep deprivation, infection, hyperventilation, illness, shock, heat or illness. The best treatment starts with identifying the problem by asking the athlete about it: Have you eaten today? What did you eat? Are you too warm, too cold? Do you feel okay? Are you hurt? Did you get hit too hard? How you handle the condition depends on the answer.

### **Nosebleeds**

Nosebleeds are typically the result of a forceful blow to the nose and/or face and are easily treated in most cases. Place the athlete in an upright position and ask him or her to lean forward to prevent blood from draining down the throat. Apply ice and pressure to the soft part of the nose for five minutes, and apply gauze or a nose plug. Avoid blowing the nose for two hours or more to avoid loosening the blood clot. If a nosebleed continues to occur without trauma, or if it cannot be stopped, it should be evaluated by a physician.

### **Skin Bruises**

Sudden, blunt forces to the skin cause bruises, or contusions. The skin isn't broken but the tissue below (muscle, blood vessels) is damaged. A minor contusion usually causes broken blood vessels and discoloration to the skin. A greater force will usually do more damage, causing more pain and discomfort. Symptoms include redness, pain or discomfort, swelling, tenderness and discoloration. Whether mild or severe, treat the bruise the same: place on ice bag or pack over the area. Initially, avoid heat. Elevate the bruised area above heart level and compress it with an elastic bandage or wrap. Rest the affected area.

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### **Basic Medical Kit Content**

Stocked medical kits stored on the sidelines come in handy in a medical emergency. Here are some recommendations for a basic medical kit:

- Athletic tape, 1.5 inches wide
- Pre-wrap or tape under-wrap
- Adhesive bandages
- Gauze pads
- Antibiotic ointment
- Non-latex gloves; and Ice bags
- Other items may include a CPR shield, tongue depressor/popsicle stick, biohazard bag, scissors and sterile saline.

The recommendations for managing common sports injuries and conditions are excerpted from the **Guide**, written by primary care sports medicine physician Grant Morrison, M.D., and certified athletic trainers Brent Millikin, ATC, and Jim Rakow, ATC. This information is intended to inform and educate and is not a substitute for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a qualified health care professional.

For more information about treating common sports injuries, see the *First Aid Guide for Athletes: a consumer guide to treating common sports injuries*. For more information or to order a booklet or kit, call 612-273-4800. Minnesota Sports Medicine provides sports medicine services and resources to Minnesota's athletic community. Visit [www.mnsportsmed.org](http://www.mnsportsmed.org).